

*The Antient and Modern Stages survey'd.*

OR,

Mr COLLIER's View

OF THE

Immorality and Profaness

OF THE

*English* Stage

Set in a

TRUE LIGHT.

Wherein some of Mr Collier's Mistakes are rectified, and the comparative Morality of the *English* Stage is asserted upon the Parallel. *By James Drake*

*Rode Caper Vitem, tamen hinc cum stabis  
ad Aram,*

*In tua quod fundi Cornua possit, erit. Ov.*

L O N D O N,

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TO THE  
Right Honourable  
**CHARLES**  
Earl of *Dorset*, and  
*Middlesex*,

Baron *Buckhurst*, one of the  
Lords of His Majesty's  
Most Honourable Privy  
Council, Lord Lieu-  
tenant of the County of  
*Sussex*, and Knight of  
the most Noble Order  
of the Garter, &c.

*My Lord,*

**I**N addressing to Your Lord-  
ship, tho I betray my Am-  
bition, I shall strengthen the  
opi-

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opinion of my Integrity. For by appealing to so great, and so impartial a Judge, I give the World sufficient demonstration, that I trust more to the Merit of my Cause, than of my Performance, and depend rather upon the matter, than the manner of what I deliver, for my Justification.

The Tyde of Prejudice runs high for my Adversary, and the less discerning part of the Town are so prepossess'd with the Specious Title, and the Plausible Pretence of Mr Collier's Book, that they think the whole Interest of Virtue and Religion embark'd on that Bottom. Immorality and Prophaness are things so justly abhorrd, that whoever enters the Lists against 'em, has all Good Men for his Seconds. And their  
zeal

### *Dedictory.*

zeal for the Cause so far  
blinds many of 'em, that  
they neither see, nor suspect any  
Defect or Treachery in their  
Champion. For men are very  
unwilling to hear Truth, against  
Prejudice, and suffer Reason to  
triumph over Inclination.

The Town is divided in its  
Judgment of the Piece, and the  
whole Contest lies betwixt those  
that are Judges, and those that  
are not, as Cardinal *Richlieu* said  
upon another occasion. The  
latter are of the Opposite Facti-  
on, and are as much more nu-  
merous than the former; as Va-  
nity and Presumption are more  
Universal, than Understanding.

This makes the Prefixing your  
Lordships name, by your own  
Permission, whose Judgment is  
as little to be byass'd, as 'tis to

### *The Epistle*

be question'd, not only matter of Honour to me, but of necessary Defence. Not that I expect any Protection for those Errors which I may have committed. They must be left to the mercy of Readers of far less Judgment and Candour, than *Your Honour*. To be tried by such a Grand Jury, is a happiness I am so far from expecting, that I know it impossible. But the Deference due to so great a Name may procure me a fair hearing amongst some, upon whom a bare regard to Justice wou'd hardly prevail so far.

Did Mr *Collier* contend only for the better Establishment of Virtue, and Reformation of Manners, I shou'd be asham'd to appear against him. But there is a Snake in the Grass. Mr *Collier* under-



### *Dedictory.*

undertakes the Patronage of Virtue, as Cunning Men do the Guardianship of rich Orphans, only to make his Markets of it. That this is his case, the following Sheets will, I hope, sufficiently demonstrate. His Vehemence gives us just ground to suspect his Integrity, and to believe that he has some conceal'd Interest, or Pique at the bottom. The disinterested enquiry after Truth is always accompany'd with Candour; where that is wanting, there is just reason to suspect some further design. In Mr Collier's management, the Heat and Smoke are too great and apparent for the Fire to be long conceal'd. His Design is manifestly not to argue the Poets out of their Faults, but to bully his Readers out of their Under-

### *The Epistle*

standings, and by violence to alter the Impressions already receiv'd of those matters. which he treats of. His Style is adapted to his purpose, fierce and bold, full of vehement exaggerations, and haughty menaces, he racks Sentences, and tortures Expressions, to extort a Confession from 'em of things to which they are absolute Strangers. The consequence of this way of writing is, that Women, and Weak Men, whose Fears are stronger than their Judgments, will be aw'd into a Perswasion before they are convinc'd of the Truth of it. For such People in most cases measure the certainty of Assertions by the Confidence of him that pronounces 'em, and the Importance by the false weight that is laid upon 'em.

'I was

*Dedictory.*

'Twas this consideration, not any extraordinary Affection for the Stage, that engag'd me in this Argument. I look upon it as an attempt towards usurping the Sovereignty of Men's Understandings, and restoring the Tyranny of Bigottry, whose Yoak we have scarce yet sufficiently shaken off. My Reason is the dearest, and freest part of me, or at least it ought to be so, and he that puts the Dice upon that, affronts me in the most sensible manner. I had rather be bubbled of my Money than my Intellects, and shou'd chuse rather to be thought his Cully, than his Fool. 'Tis true, these tricks are not to be put upon a man that is aware of 'em, and consequently I might have secur'd myself without making a publick disco-

### *The Epistle*

discovery. But I think it a Cowardly piece of Caution, a sort of Criminal Misprision to connive at the cheating of others ; and while I am able to inform 'em, the Clamour of Knaves or Fools shall never awe me to Silence.

That this is no extravagant Surmise, no Hypochondriacal Fancy, is evident from the Tenour of the whole Book, especially the third Chapter. Every thing is deliver'd with an air so haughty, so magisterial, so decisive, that he seems rather to serve us with an Injunction to believe him, than an Argument. That this Imposition may be the more tamely submitted to, he palms the Authority of the Church upon us, and pretends her Commission to make Fools of the Laity. The

### *Dedictory.*

The Church is by no means oblig'd to him, for endeavouring to cast the *Odium* of his own Arrogance and Ambition upon her. How great soever his Zeal for her service may be, his Indiscretion in it does not come a whit behind it. For to extend the Power and Authority of the Priest, he curtails the Articles of the Church, and denies the King's Supremacy, which she has already oblig'd him to swear to the belief of.

I shall not trespass so far upon Your Honour's patience, as to recapitulate the several Invidious things, which he fathers upon the Church. I will hope well of his Design, tho I fear the effects of his Performance will not turn to her Service. And I cou'd wish his Motives were better,  
or



### *The Epistle*

or not so apparent. If *Demetrius* was a Stickler for the honour of *Diana*, 'twas because he made Shrines for her, the interest of his trade engag'd him in her Party. Mr *Collier's* Case is not much different. The Poets had sometimes made bold to display a vicious, or a foolish Priest, and those that were Knaves in the World, and Drolls in the Pulpit, had been made Cheats and Buffoons upon the Stage. The Mask of Formality and Sanctity was pull'd off, and the Block-head and the Hypocrite shewn bare-fac'd. Thus the Profane Vulgar were suffer'd to peep, and pry into Mysteries. This Mr *Collier* resents as if he were personally concern'd, and wou'd perswade the world, that to expose Hypocrisie is to affront the Church,

*Dedicatory.*

Church, than which her Enemies cou'd not have suggested any thing more malicious. However, this mistaken Injury has rais'd a Flame, which will cost the effusion of abundance of Ink before it is extinguish'd. *Manet alta Mente repostum*, and is never to be forgiven while Mr Collier can wag a Goose-quill.

Our *Clergy* deservedly have both at home and abroad the reputation of the most learned *Clergy* in the World, and I shall venture to affirm, that they are the Best in the World. Their Candour towards those that differ from 'em in Opinion, their Modesty in asserting their own, and their sober Conduct in the discharge of their own Consciences, and not assuming the dominion of those of other men,  
will

### *The Epistle*

will prove what I say to  
to be no Paradox. And there-  
fore Mr *Collier*, in making so  
large a demand in their names,  
has obliquely traduc'd 'em, by  
giving occasion to those that  
don't sufficiently know 'em, to  
suspect that he acts by their Ap-  
probation and Authority.

But I forget, that while I talk  
to Your Lordship, I wrong the  
Publick, which claims so great a  
share in your thoughts and time.  
I shall not attempt the Character  
of Your Lordship: For, to write  
of you, as I ought, to do you  
Justice, I must write like you,  
which I hope I shall never have  
the vanity to pretend to. But  
the Name of *My Lord Dorset* a-  
lone carries more Panegyrick  
than the fruitfullest Invention  
can furnish. Those Adventurous  
Gen-

*Dedictory.*

Gentlemen, that have already tried their Strength at it, have by their foils taught me caution. Their Performances fall so extremely short of the Merit of their Subject, that when they have exhausted their Fancies, their whole stock of Rhetorick looks like an Ostentation of Beggery. This consideration alone is sufficient to deter me from presuming further upon Your Lordship's Goodness, except to ask Pardon for my Ambition of taking this Publick Occasion to declare with what profound Respect I am

*My Lord,*

*Your Honour's Most humble*

*and devoted Servant.*

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P. 23. for *se de* r. *sed* &: p. 29. for *Verundia* r. *Verecundia*. p. 57. for *id eo* r. *diffes*: p. 69. r. *ac* for *reliis* r. *reliis*: for *tribi* r. *tribu*: p. 71. for *visus* r. *visu*: p. 113. for *Dio* r. *Dii*: p. 169. r. *χενε*: p. 126. dele *and*: p. 192. dele *The Moral*: p. 226. r. *δυσυχία* p. 317. r. *Mr Collier's instances*.

*Mr*

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Mr. COLLIER's *View*

OF THE

*English Stage, &c.*

Set in a

TRUE LIGHT.

**T**He aim of all Writers is, or *Introduc.*  
ought to be, to maintain or *on.*  
propagate *Truth*, to inform  
the *Judgment*, improve the *Under-*  
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others. Where this is the real end and design of a Writer, no Itch of *Popularity*, or Awe of *Faction* ought to bear him from his Byass, or make him give an inch to his *Hopes*, or *Fears*; and the more Universal and Important the Truths are, which he discovers, or defends, the greater in proportion ought to be the Zeal and Application.

Were these rules constantly, and prudently pursued, we might hope for an honest, as well as wiser world, than it has been my fortune yet to find any Memoirs of, since the multiplication of Mankind. For tho the *Declaimers* of all *Ages* have inveighed with great bitterness against their own times, and extoll'd the antecedent; yet even hence we are furnish'd with an argument, that all have been equally culpable, since those times, which we, to humble our own, affect so zealously to commend, our *Fore-fathers* did as vehemently condemn; and if we do not find the *Topicks* of *Satyr* to be in every *Age* the same; we can only from thence conclude, that the *Mode*, and not the *Measure* of *Iniquity* is alter'd.

But



But whether the rules be strictly observable, or not, may be matter of doubt. For, besides that grand *Seducer Interest*, which few withstand, *Passion*, *Prejudice*, and *Inclination*, have an almost irresistible Influence over us; and even in the coolest, and severest of our deliberations, we are apt to give too much to *Prejudice*, and to humour *Appetite* and *Passion* beyond Reason.

That this is no uncommon case, most of the present *Paper-Combats* demonstrate, in which the War on both sides is carry'd on with an obstinacy and fury, very disproportionate to the trifles generally contended for. The Combatants enter the lists against Chimerical Gyants of their own raising, and lay about 'em like *Ajax*, or *Cervantes's Hero*, amongst the Sheep, Gyants, or Windmills, 'tis all one, if they stand in their way they must be encounter'd.

The most formidable of these, is the Author of the *Short View of the Immorality and Profaneness of the English Stage*. This Gentleman, some time or other, between sleeping and waking, had happen'd to hear some of Mr *Durfy's*

Rattles, and perhaps some saucy *Jack* or other of the Stage discharge an Oath or two, and presently mistaking 'em for a noise of Drums, and volley of Shot, falls to dreaming of Invasions and Revolutions, that the Church Artillery was seiz'd, and turn'd upon it; of a terrible Stage Plot, and a huge Army in Ambuscade behind the Play-house Scenes; and therefore he cries out to have the Beacons lighted, and the Bells rung backward in every Parish, to raise the *Posse* of Fathers, Councils, Synods, School-men, and the rest of the Church Militia, and cast up Retrenchments, for the Vanguard of *Parnassus* are upon 'em. Then he calls for his *Durindana* of a Goose-quill, and thunders out *Anathema's* asthick a Hail shot.

Thus instructed and appointed, he draws out his forces, and charges with such violence and fury upon the Forlorn-Hope of the Stage, that it had been impossible for 'em to have sustain'd the shock, if *Pegasus* had not been train'd of old to the service, and very well acquainted with the temper of the Enemies Fire.

This

This Anti-poetick War has been carry'd on with abundance of heat at divers times and in divers Countries ; it broke out first in *Spain*, about the close of the last Century, under *Mariana* a Jesuit, who published a Book *Contra Spectacula* ; and after that another, by the Special Approbation of the Visitor, and the Provincial of the Jesuits of the Province of *Toledo* ; from thence it travell'd into *Italy*, where it was fomented by *Francisco Maria*, a *Sicilian* Monk, and *P. Ottonelli*, a Jesuit ; and was thence translated into *England*, about sixty years ago, by *Dr Reynolds* and *Mr Prynne* ; to *France*, about thirty years ago, by the Prince of *Conti*, the *Sieur de Voisin*, &c. and tho bury'd for some years in its embers, broke out again there not many years ago into a flame ; at which *Mr Collier* took fire, and reviv'd the quarrel in *England*.

All these disputes have been manag'd with great vehemence and fierceness on the Aggressor's parts, and had the success been answerable to their Resolution, the scatter'd rout of *Parnassus* had been never able to have rally'd.

or made head again ; but their Onset was like that of the *Turks* and *Tartars*, the Noise was much greater than the Execution. I cou'd never find that the *Muses* were famous for Martial Exploits, or that their Votaries e're signaliz'd themselves by any extraordinary achievements in the Polemicks. How comes it then, that such impetuous Assaultants have gain'd no more upon 'em? For as yet the very Outworks of *Parnassus* seem to be in no danger. Is it the natural strength of the Place, or Resolution of the Defendants that Protects 'em?

Before I give a direct answer to these questions, it will be necessary to premise a short account of the occasion, state, and progress of the Controversie, in, and from the time of the Primitive Fathers down to our own Times ; by which we may be enabled to make a right Judgment, how far the present Stage is affected by the Authorities, and Arguments urg'd from 'em.

Shows among the  
Heathens  
of Religious  
Parentage.

It is on all hands agreed, that the *Ludi* and *Spectacula* of the *Greeks* and *Romans*, were a great part of the Solemn and Publick Worship of their Gods,



Gods, instituted on purpose to commemorate, or expiate some signal Benefit, or Calamity, of which those Gods were the supposed Authors, or Instruments: These Plays or Shows were usually preceded by a Solemn Procession of the Gods to whom they were dedicated, and the Priests and Sacrificers in their Formalities, with the Victim in all its Religious Pomp, (much after the manner of the Solemn Processions in use amongst the *Roman* Catholicks to this day) this was succeeded by Vows made, and Sacrifice perform'd upon the spot, whether it were Theatre, *Circus*, or any other place of publick Shows, or Games. After all these were perform'd, or finish'd, the Play or Show was order'd to begin, which was also a principal part of the Religious Worship, and concluded the Solemnity of the day.

The Dramatick Representations spring both from one Original, and were instituted for the same general end and purpose with the rest of the Heathen Games, that is, for Religious Worship. These (if I may be allow'd to use the plural number, for that which in the Original, was but one thing)

*The Drama  
of the same  
extraction.*



thing) were invented in honour to *Bacchus*, and consisted of Songs in his praise, Musick, and Dancing about a Sacrific'd Goat, intermixt with rustick raillery, suitable to the Genius and Temper of the Boors, and Villagers, that were the performers. Tragedy and Comedy were not yet become Separate Provinces in Poetry, but either name indifferently signify'd the same thing, the first being taken from the Sacrifice, which was a Goat, the other from the Performers, which were the Peasants, or Villagers, or from the nature of the Entertainment itself, which was compos'd of Rural Musick, Songs, and Dances. By what steps and gradations the improvements were made, how the decorations of the Stage were introduc'd, and when the Drama first branch'd into Tragedy and Comedy, as distinct members, are pretty speculations, and afford an occasion, which one, that, like Mr. *Collier*, affected to shew much reading to little purpose, wou'd not let slip; but not being to my purpose, I shall not prosecute 'em any farther.

Tragedy &  
Comedy ori-  
ginally one  
thing.

'Tis

'Tis probable the partition of Tragedy and Comedy was first made, when the Poets, quitting the *Dithyrambi*, or Hymns to *Bacchus*, betook themselves to the representation of Stories or Fables of their own invention; the nature of the subjects then becoming different, according to the Poets choice, the names were divided betwixt 'em. Or perhaps, that part which we now in a restrain'd sense call Tragedy, being first refin'd and improv'd, and becoming the study and diversion of more Polite Men, the other continuing longer in the Possession of the Villagers, retain'd the name of Comedy for distinction sake, even after its utmost improvements.

But when, or howsoever this was, tho the Sacrifice of the Goat at Plays was left off, the *Satyri* in praise of *Bacchus* discontinued, and the Plays appointed indifferently in honour of any of the Gods, as occasion directed, that they were, as the Auditors rightly observed, *Nihil ad Bacchum*, yet the Stage remain'd sacred to and under the Protection of its old Patron, who had amongst the *Romans* his Altar on the Right

Right hand of the Stage, and the particular God to whom the Play was for that time directed, on the Left. This was the Posture and Condition of the Stage in the time of the Fathers.

This being the case, a Christian cou'd not be present, or assist at these representations, without openly countenancing or conforming to the Idolatrous Worship of the Heathens; which the Fathers, as became careful and pious Pastors, were extremely solicitous to prevent. They were sensible of the difficulties they had to encounter, and the obstacles they had to surmount. The Christian Religion was yet but newly planted, and therefore till it had taken sufficient Root was carefully to be cover'd and defended from the injuries of rude Blasts, and the contagion of those rank superstitious Weeds that grew about it, by which the Root might be kill'd, or the Soil infected, and the Sap withdrawn.

*Paganism  
a Religion  
contriv'd  
for popula-  
rity.*

Paganism was a Religion, invented at first to oblige and captivate the people, and gain'd its Credit and Authority among 'em by indulging their Sensuality, and even gratifying their Lusts; it was

aug

augmented by degrees, by ambitious, cunning men, who, to render themselves more popular, and gain an interest among the multitude, recommended to 'em, under the notion of Religion, what they found most acceptable to the humour and palate of the populace. By this means, the various Processions, Games, and Shows were introduc'd, and became the most formal part of their Solemnities, men being easily persuaded to like what was so conformable to their inclinations, that in the exercise and discharge of their Duties, their Senses were entertain'd, and their Appetites flatter'd.

Against a Superstition thus fram'd for Luxury, and contriv'd to cajole the Sences, Christianity was to make its way, and to drive out those Rites, and destroy a Title founded upon the prescription of many ages, supported by the authority of the Civil Government, and fortify'd in its Possession by Prejudice, Inclination and Interest; and all this to be done with the assistance only of Truth, and Simplicity of Doctrine and Manners; the Pomp, and Magnificence of their Solemn Worship



ship was absolutely to be taken away, and their licentious practices to be restrain'd, and reform'd; and instead of 'em severe Principles, and an austere course of Life were to be establish'd, in an Age, and amongst a People, whom the Submission and Tribute of all the World for some ages, had made wealthy, proud and wanton.

It is not therefore to be wonder'd, if those early Champions of the Gospel proportion'd their Zeal and Vigilance to the pressingness of the occasion, and the strength of the opposition. The Games and Shows of the antient Heathens were the parts of their Religion the most generally engaging, that attracted most, and kept the Multitude firmest to 'em. The rest of their Religion sat but loosely about 'em, they had no fixt, or necessary Faith, and their devotion consisted only in a frigid compliance with those Forms and Ceremonies, which were purely matters of Worship; their Zeal appear'd for nothing so much as their Games and Shows. Foras *Varro* \* and *Seneca* † informs us, the preparatory Solemnities were ungrateful to the spectators, who

im

*Heathen  
Religion  
all Cere-  
mony.*

\* *Pompa  
populo in-  
grata fuit,  
quia ludis  
mora. Var-  
ro de Ling.  
Lat. Lib. 4.  
† Non igno-  
ras quam  
sit odiosa  
Circensibus  
Pompa.*



impatiently expected the Show. The Fathers, who knew where their strength lay, have employ'd all their Artillery against these Shows, their Batteries have play'd incessantly upon 'em, as the only Forts that were capable of making resistance, and stopping their Progress.

Tho the antient Fathers bent their Rhetorick, with all its Force, and in all its Forms and Figures, against the Heathen Shows; tho they declaim'd with all their Nerves, and Vehemence, and display'd all their Arguments with the utmost strength of Colour and Proportion, yet there was nothing in which they so much confided, in which they so unanimously agreed, as the objection drawn from the Idolatrous institution and end of 'em. They were unwarrantable, because Idolatrous. It was ( in their opinion ) impossible for a Christian, how well principled, or dispos'd however, to partake of the Entertainment, without sharing the Pollution, or to abstract the Diversion from the Guilt. They thought it dangerous to trust their Converts, however fortify'd, to the tempta-

*Idolatry of  
the Stage,  
the princi-  
pal argu-  
ment of the  
Fathers a-  
gainst it.*

temptations of so jolly a Religion ; which was so far from curbing the appetites, and laying any restraint upon the desires of its Profelytes, that many of its duties were but Pimps to their Lusts, and almost all its acts of Devotion but so many entertainments of their Sences. They knew the frailty of humane Nature right well , and were aware, that tho Faith might in some be so strong as to triumph over all temptation, yet that Multitudes wou'd fall before it, if they were permitted to run the risque.

The portion of those that embrac'd Christianity was Mortification , and suffering, perpetual discouragement , and frequent Persecutions (till the time of *Constantine* ) their Reward was in Reversion ; their Expectation indeed was large, but the Prospect was distant. Now present Ease and Enjoyment are very apt to prevail against a remote Hope. In our common affairs of the world, Futurity maintains itself but ill against the Present , and neither the greatness, nor the certainty of the Reversion, make good head against immediate Possession.

This

This was the case of Christianity in its Infancy. The Heathen Priesthood was contented with the Countenance and Encouragement of the State, and submitted to the directions and appointment of it, even in matters relating to their own Mysteries ; they assum'd no Dominion, or Jurisdiction over private Consciences, either in point of Principle or Practice ; but left those matters wholly to the Civil Government, which made Laws for the regulation, and appointed Magistrates for the inspection of Men's Manners ; in which regard was had chiefly, if not only, to the Publick Quiet and Security, to the Preservation and Augmentation of the State. If a scrutiny was made into the Conduct and Behaviour of particular persons, 'twas as they were subordinate to the Publick, and might be instrumental or prejudicial to the common welfare, either immediately, by their practices, in wronging the State, or those under the Protection of it ; or by withdrawing themselves from, or incapacitating themselves for its service ; or consequently by debauching, and corrupting others by their Examples.

In

In all these matters the Priest had no concern ; and therefore 'twas no wonder, if the People receiv'd so easily, and liv'd so contentedly under a Religion, which, tho false, gave 'em so little disturbance, and so much satisfaction: For, as for the Multitude, their Theology was like their Worship, suited and adapted to their capacities, the one consisting of surprizing Fables, the other of delightful Solemnities. Those that were wiser among 'em, and saw thro their Mysteries, (who were not a few) were many of 'em *Sacris initiati*, and engaged in their support ; the rest having no higher warrant than their own Reason, and nothing more certain to substitute in the room of 'em, were perhaps unwilling to unsettle matters, and paying a languid Complacence, suffer'd things to run on in the old Channel ; whose Banks shou'd they break down, they knew not what course the Stream wou'd take, nor how far the Confusion might spread.

But the Gospel had none of these advantages, it was not contriv'd and modell'd for Popularity, it did not humour the Inclinations, and indulge  
the



the Appetites of the People. To the Purity of its Doctrine, a Conformity of Life, and Manners were requir'd, the Passions were to be curb'd, and the Desires moderated ; instead of Pomp and Ceremony, Simplicity and Sobriety were to be their Entertainments : their rampant Gods, whose fabulous Histories gave countenance to Men's Lusts, and encouragement to their Debaucheries, were to be cashier'd, and the knowledge and worship of the True One to be introduc'd, whose Majesty was as awful, as the other was represented frolicksome.

These were the conditions of Conversion from Heathenism, and the change must needs appear disadvantageous to meer Flesh and Blood. The Fathers therefore, who knew how hard it was to keep the Appetites in entire subjection, took care to fortifie as strongly as possible those parts, in which they expected the Rebellion should first break out. The Plays, of *Heathen Plays dangerous as temptations to the new* all the Heathen Solemnities, were those that gave the strongest temptation to the new Converts ; they had so little *of Christian Converts.*



of the Air of Religion, that they thought if they did not approve of the end and design of 'em, they might, without imputation, partake of the Diversion, in which they met with frequent Examples of Innocence and Virtue. This alarm'd the Fathers, who knew that *the transition from one Religion to another* ( as Mr Collier observes ) *was natural* ; and justly apprehended, that from a liking of the Entertainments themselves, they might proceed to approve the occasion of 'em ; that the seeming Innocence and Virtue of 'em might reconcile 'em to a Superstition which recommended those excellent Gifts after so easie and agreeable a manner, or that perhaps the delights of those places might soften the temper of their mind, and relax the nerves of their zeal, and so unqualifie and indispose 'em for those Austerities, which the Posture and Circumstances of the Christian Religion at that time requir'd.

*Zeal of the Fathers against 'em not unnecessary.* To obviate these dangers, they summon'd all their Prudence, and all their Art ; they omitted no Topick which Rhetorick or Satyr could supply, to fright or perswade Men from those  
Diver-

**Diversions.** Nor was all their Zeal and Caution any more than was necessary, the Danger was great, and so was the Temptation; the Fort was to be maintain'd not only against an Enemy without, but a strong Faction within; the Sences, Appetites, and Passions were already gain'd to the Enemy's Party, nothing remain'd but Religion and Reason, to make good the defence; those Generals therefore that would hold out, when the Garrison was inclin'd to Surrender, must not only display their Courage and Conduct, but exert their Authority likewise to the utmost. This the Ancient Fathers did, whose examples have been follow'd by divers in our Age, tho without the same Reason, Authority or Success.

Having thus open'd the Case, as it stood in the time of the Primitive Christians, we shall proceed to examine, Whether there be any manner of Analogy between the *Roman Theatre* (as to the particulars whereof they are arraign'd by the Fathers) and ours? Whether *the Satyr of the Fathers comes view p. full upon the Modern Poets?* Whether 276.  
*the Parity of the Case makes their Reasons*

take place, and their Authority revive upon us?

p. 277.

Thus backt, as he supposes by the *Worthies of Christendom, the flower of Human Nature, and the Top of their Species*, Mr Collier bids defiance to all the Stage Poets in general: He declares 'em to be *gone over into another Interest*, Deserters to the Devil, *that aim to destroy Religion*, and whose business is an ana of *Lewdness and Atheism*. For

p. 1.

p. 124.

Pras.

p. 257.

he has a huge mind to try his strength with 'em, but he dares not enter the Theatres, they are the *Devils own Ground*; but he challenges 'em to a tryal of skill at the laudable exercises of the Christian Olympicks of *Moorfields*; which, if they be so hardy as to accept, he'll call a Ring, and for a broken Head, or Limb, he and his Fathers defy both North and West.

*Disingenuity of Mr. Collier.*

But hold, Mr *Vinegar*! have you any commission from the Fathers to give this Challenge in their Names? Does it appear, that they have any ground, or reason of quarrel to the present Stage? I believe not; but as things may be packt together, and translated, an able Interpreter may make 'em speak

as

as he pleases. If they don't speak to his mind he knows how to correct 'em, 'tis but *throwing in a word or two* (as he phrases it) *to clear the sense, to preserve the Spirit of the Original, and keep the* <sup>Pras.</sup> *English upon its Legs.* 'Tis well he has the knack of Scowring the Fathers, otherwise their Testimonies wou'd look but rustily upon the present occasion. But he can wash as well as scowr, and underprop a failing Evidence upon occasion. 'Tis pity Mr *Collier* was not bred to the Bar, this extraordinary quality had been of admirable service there, to help a bad Memory, and prompt a bashful Witness. The Fathers, good men, cou'd say but little to the Cause, but Dexterity and Management may do much, and an able Solicitor (like Mr *Collier*) will make out notable proofs from very slender Evidence.

The Fathers, as they had reason, <sup>Idolatry</sup> prohibited Christians all resort to the <sup>the main</sup> Roman Games in general, and without <sup>Objections</sup> distinction upon the account of the <sup>of the Fa-</sup> Idolatry there practised: But what's <sup>thers to the</sup> that to our Theatres, which have no <sup>Ancient</sup> such stain upon 'em? If the <sup>Drama.</sup> Hesthen



Gods appear upon our Stage, tis nei-  
ther for their own, nor their Worshipers  
honour. Idolatry is as much abhorr'd,  
and more expos'd there, than any  
where else. Why then is the Satyr re-

viv'd upon it? Is there any danger that  
the Spectators should turn Idolaters,  
from our Representations? That which  
scandaliz'd the Fathers most in the  
Dramatick Representations of Antiqui-  
ty was, that their Gods were represent-  
ed lewd, and unjust, Adulterers,  
Pimps, &c.

\* *Et hæc  
sunt scenico  
ram olera-  
biliora do-  
rum Comæ-  
diæ scilicet  
& Tragediæ  
hoc est fabu-  
læ Poetarum  
agendæ in  
spectaculis,  
multa rer.*

*turpitudine  
sed nulla,  
saltem, sicut  
alia multa  
verborum  
obscenitate  
compositæ  
quas etiam  
inter studia  
quæ hone-  
sta, & libe-  
ralia vocan-  
tur, pueri,  
legere dis-  
cere q;  
senibus co-  
guntur. De  
Civit. Dei  
lib. 2.*

\* *Aug. Conf.  
lib. 1. cap.  
16.*

\* *St Augustine* absolves their Come-  
dies and Tragedies from any fault in  
the expression, and accuses only the  
subject matter. The same Indictment  
he prefers against *Homer*, (*viz.*) that  
he corrupted Mens Morals by draw-  
ing such vicious Pictures of his Dei-  
ties. \* *Terence* falls under his displeasure  
likewise, for introducing his young  
Libertine animating himself to, and  
vindicating himself after a Rape, by  
the example of *Jupiter*, whose In-  
trigue with *Danae*, represented in a  
Picture, afforded him both matter  
of Encouragement and Excuse. Not-  
withstanding which objections, this

\* *Fa-*



\* Father confesses himself to have profited by the reading of 'em, tho he thinks the same use might have been made of more pious Books, which are fitter for the use of Children. Thus by the acknowledgment of this Father the Plays were not so bad. as Mr *Collier* would infer from him. The quarrel of the rest of the Fathers to the Drama, was upon the same account, tho Mr Surveyor has given a wrong prospect of it. I hope there's no reason to apprehend, that *Jupiter* or *Mercury* shou'd be drawn into precedent at this time of day, or that any person of Quality shou'd turn Whore-matter, or Pimp out of emulation.

'Tis true, the Fathers frequently exclaim against the lewdness of the *Roman* Theatres, which Mr *Collier* all along endeavours, both by the turn and application, to discharge upon the Dramatick Representations, in which I admire his dexterity more than his ingenuity. For I can't suppose Mr *Collier* to be ignorant, that there were divers sorts of *Ludi Scenici*, which were all perform'd at the Theatre, of which several were scandalously lewd; but

\* Didici in  
eis multa  
verba uti-  
lia, sed et in  
rebus non  
vanis disci-  
possunt &  
via tuta est,  
in qua Pu-  
eri ambula-  
rent. lib.  
Conf. ss. i  
cap. xv.

*Mimick*  
*Shews a-*  
*mong the*  
*Romans*  
*scandalous*  
*lewd, the*  
*Drama no*  
*at all.*

these he knows were no part of the Dramatick Entertainment.

Clemen's  
Alexandri-  
us cited  
against the  
Drama.

But he finds Comedy and Tragedy sometimes condemn'd for company among the other Shows of the Theatre, and therefore he is resolved, out of his singular regard to Justice and Ingenuity, that whatsoever is pronounc'd against the Theatres in general, shall light upon the Drama in particular, which by the unanimous confession of 'em all was the least offensive, and consequently the least deserv'd it. To what purpose

View p. 260  
Nec incon-  
cine stadia  
& Theatra  
Pestilentia  
Cithædram  
quis voca-  
verit. Pa-  
dag. lib. 3.  
cap. ii.

else is *Clemens Alexandrinus* cited? He affirms, that the Circus and Theatre may not improperly be call'd the Chair of Pestilence. Whence does it appear, that the Dramatick Exercises are here aim'd at? Were the *Mimi*, *Pantomimi*, and *Archimimi*,

less concern'd with the Stage, or more reserv'd and modest in their practices upon it? Were dancing naked, and expressing lewd Postures less criminal, or offensive to modesty? No, he won't say that; altho the comparison were made with the *English* Stage, which is, (according to him) much more licentious than the *Roman*, yet that by his own confession has nothing so bad.

But

View p.  
277.

But supposing the Father to take his aim from Mr Collier's direction, and prophetically to have levell'd at our times, what is the wondrous guilt, that provokes this severe Judgment ? *Noscitur ex socio*, why 'tis e'en as bad as Horse-racing; a very lewd diversion truly. Woe be to you Inhabitants of *New Market*, that live in the very Seat of Infection.

But the Fathers were men, meer men, *The Fathers* as well as Mr Collier, and subject as *sometimes* well as he to be misled by passion, and *over rigorous* overacted by zeal, in the transports of which they were apt sometimes to extend their rigour too far, and would upon any terms have (as a certain Learned Recorder has it) *enough for a* decent Execution. Thus *Tertu'lian*, none *Sic & Tragædos* of the least considerable among the *Cothurnis* Fathers, either for his Learning or Zeal, *extulit* in this case especially, tho he had already convinc'd the Ancient Tragedy of *Diabolus,* Idolatry, a Crime sufficient in a *quia nemo* Christian Court of Judicature to be capital, yet must needs *potest adjicere cubitum unum ad staturam suam, mendacem tacere vult* *ex abundanti* bring a fresh Indictment of Blasphemy. *The Devil*, says he, *Christum.* *mounted the Tragedians upon Buskins,* *Tert. de Spectac.* *because he would make our Saviour a Liar,* *says, cap. 23.* *who*

*says, that no man can add a Cubit to his Stature. Look to it all ye Tiptoe Beau's.*

Here the Devil shew'd himself an Engineer, to lay a Trap so long before hand, to contrive and invent these Buskins only to falsify in appearance, what was said a thousand years after ; and the Father himself was a very *Mat-chiavel* to detect, and counterplot him at last. I have read of a famous *Scotch* Divine, that signaliz'd himself once upon occasion, by much such another discovery, when he found out, that at the dismissal of all Creatures out of *Noah's* Ark, the reason why the Hawks were so merciful to the Doves, as to let 'em escape unhurt was, that the Prophecie of *Isaiah*, the *Lamb should lye down with the Lyon*, might be fulfilled. This is the nearest parallel that occurs to me from all my reading, in which the *Scotch* Father comes pretty near t'other for a strange reach of apprehension, tho 'tis his misfortune to fall short in the importance of the discovery.

But to wave all further instances of this kind from the Fathers, which are to be found in great plenty among 'em,



I leave 'em to be gather'd by those that take more delight in such Flowers ; and shall confine my self to those which Mr. Collier has pickt out for a Nosegay for himself.

To begin therefore with *Theophilus* view. p. 252: *Antiochenus* ; He tells us, that the Christians durst not see the Prizes of the Gladiators, for fear of becoming accessory to the Murthers there committed, nor their other Shows, upon the account of their Indecency and Prophaneness.

Here Mr Collier, as an earnest of his future fair dealing uses the word *Shows*, and because perhaps 'tis the only instance to be met with through all his Quotations, he is resolv'd not to lose the benefit of it, and therefore for fear it should slip by unheeded, he gives it in a different character, and an asterism along with it, and claps in the Margin *Spe&acula*. By this sample of his Fidelity to his Author, he thinks his performance warranted to his Readers, of whom he knows the greatest part can't nor the rest he hopes won't, be at the trouble to confront his Translation with the Text ; and therefore before the end of this very Paragraph, he throws  
off



off all obligation to Truth and Justice  
and falls to managing and instructing  
his Evidence

\* Ibid.

Nec fas est  
nobis audire  
adulteria  
Deorum  
Hominumq;  
quæ suavi  
verborum  
modulantur  
mercede.

Ad Antolyc.

lib. 3.

\* *The Stage Adulteries of the Gods and Heroes are unparrantable Entertainments. And so much the worse, because the Mercenary Players set off 'em with all the charms and advantages of speaking.*

The Translator very well knew, that the Shews here aim'd at, were not the Tragedies and Commedies of Antiquity, but the Shews of the *Mimi*, wherein the Amours of the Gods or Heroes were not related only, but sung to Musick in luscious fulsome Verse, mimickt in lewd dances with obscene Gestures and naked Postures, and even the very Adulteries and Rapes themselves express'd by scandalous actions, for which purpose the very Stews were rak'd for Publick Prostitutes for the Service.

These were the Shews, that provok'd the just resentments of the Fathers, which had nothing in Common with the Dramatick Representations, but the Place, and the end of their Representation, which were the Publick Theatres, and Worship. But of all the Publick Diversions of the Heathens,  
the

the Drama only remaining to us, to keep the Authority upon its Legs, it was necessary to give it a new direction, and turn in the version, and therefore the word *Players* was thrust in, to fix the Scandal in the wrong place.

That these were the Indecencies, and Lewdness of the Theatre, so bitterly inveigh'd against by these Pious men, I cou'd bring testimonies innumerable; but to avoid being tedious in a plain case, I shall single out *St Cyprian*, who being one of the *Worthies of Christendome*, and the *Top of his Species*, I hope Mr *Collier* will not except against his Evidence. \* *The Theatres* (says he) *are* yet more Lewd. There they strip themselves of their Modesty, as well as Clothes, and the honour as well as screen of their Bodies is laid aside, and Virginity expos'd to the affronts both of View, and Touch. Which Mr *Collier* knows was not practis'd in the Drama.

But our *Histrion-Mastix* was aware, that there was nothing to be got by square play, therefore he has recourse to flight of hand, and palms false Dice upon us. In the very next Paragraph we find him prompting *Tertullian* to rail

\* *Theatra sunt fœdiora, quo conuenis verunda illic omnis exuitur simul cum amictu, vestis honor corporis, & pudor ponitur, denotanda ac concrecant, da virginitas revelatur. De Habit Virg.*

\* Nihil no-  
 bis &c. cum  
 insania  
 Circi cum  
 impudicitia  
 Theatri cum  
 xyfli vani-  
 tate. Apolog-  
 adv. Gent.  
 cap. 38.

rail at the *Play-house*, and the *Bear-  
 Garden* \*. Which latter, I suppose,  
 was brought in for the grace and dig-  
 nity of the Conjunction. Here the  
*Play-house*, by his old way of Legerde-  
 main, is substituted for the *Theatre* ;  
 and the most innocent of the *Roman* Di-  
 versions charg'd with the Guilt and Pol-  
 lutions of all the rest, with which, by  
 his own Confession, it was not so much  
 as soil'd. But the shifting of Names le-  
 vell'd the Scandal right for his purpose,  
 and the unlearned Reader might per-  
 haps be induc'd to believe, that the  
 Father's quarrel lay against *Lincolns-Inn-  
 Fields*, and *Covent-Garden*; and there-  
 fore he was resolv'd not to lose the be-  
 nefit of so advantageous a Cheat, for  
 so small a condescension as falsifying a  
 Text.

\* Itaque  
 Pomperius  
 magnus solo  
 Theatro  
 minor, cum  
 illam arcem  
 omnium  
 turpitudi-  
 num ex-  
 truxisset,  
 veritus  
 quandoque  
 memorie  
 sue Cen-  
 foriam  
 Animadver-  
 sionem, Ve-  
 neris zdem  
 superposuit,  
 &c.

With the same honest view and in-  
 tention, he forces *Terrullian* to call *Pom-  
 pey's Theatre* \*, a *Dramatick Bawdy-  
 house*. Here, to conceal the Fathers  
 Age, he shaves off his Beard, and dresses  
 him after his own fashion, in a Steen-  
 kirk and a long Wig, that he may look  
 like an acquaintance of our Stage, and  
 keep his Evidence in Countenance. A  
 just

just Translation wou'd not answer his purpose, and therefore he has taken the usual liberty of adding or altering, and has clapt in the *Dramatick Bawdy-house*, to clear, that is, pervert the sense. It is no justification, to say that he has not chang'd the Scene, that the Place is the same, tho he has made bold to change the Terms; in changing the Terms he has chang'd the state of the case, and made the Author accuse the *Drama* of those enormities, which were peculiar to the Shews of the *Mimi*, and inveigh'd against only by him. Thus he uses his Father like an *Irish* Evidence, and makes him depose with as much latitude, as in a Court of Record, wou'd even in these corrupt times, cost a man his Ears.

To trace him through all his Quotations from the Fathers, were a task much more tedious, than difficult. It may suffice to take notice, that he keeps to his Principle, and never quotes any thing right, which he thinks may be made more serviceable by being perverted. To prevent this Artifice from being seen through, he endeavours, like a Fish in the Water, to conceal  
the



the bottom by muddying the Stream.

St. *Cyprian*, *Lactantius*, *Chrysostome* and *Augustine* are all manag'd at the same rate ; Mr *Collier*, like a stanch Beagle, makes the hits, whilst his Fathers, that like Whelps newly enter'd, are running Riot, have much better Mouths than Noses, and make up a great part of the Cry, but are of no service in the Chase. Those that have a mind to tumble and sift over Mr *Collier's* Rubbish of Antiquity , may find all his Quotations in *Prynne's Histrio-Mastix*, honestly transcrib'd , and more faithfully translated. To which, or to the Fathers themselves, I refer 'em. His Translations are all of a stamp, to repeat more of 'em wou'd be tautology ; how different soever the Originals might be, the Copies have all the same Features and Complexions ; both Draught and Colouring agree so well, that a very indifferent Judge might infallibly discover 'em all to be Copies by one Hand, by the Harmony of the Faults.

But to dismiss the Fathers, who have been oblig'd to an unnecessary attendance, thro the dissingenuity of their  
Tran-



Translator, I shall once for all observe, <sup>The Authority of the Fathers</sup> first, that the Authority of the Fathers ought to affect us no farther than their <sup>short of the</sup> Reasonings will come up to our case: <sup>Case.</sup>

Secondly, That their Arguments drawn from the Idolatry, lewd Representations, and Cruelty practis'd upon the *Roman* Stage, and at their Shows, do not reach our Stage, where those practices are had in abhorrence. Thirdly, That as they are cited by Mr *Collier*, both their Authority and Arguments are subverted by the corrupt Version. If these three things be fairly made out, as (I hope) they already are, we need not be any longer alarm'd at this unseasonable clamour from the Fathers.

But tho the main strength of this *Attila* of the Stage lies in these *Worthies* of *Christendom*, yet, like a cautious <sup>Caution of</sup> Commander, lest they shou'd be surpriz'd, or unable to sustain the shock of the Stage Militia alone, he has provided an Auxiliary Body of Heathen Philosophers, Historians, Orators and Poets, to guard the Passies, and check the fury of the first Onset. Here again he shews his care by his choice, he lists

D none

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D

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none but men of the first Magnitude, he's so severe that a Volunteer under six foot can't pass Muster. But after all, the Service of these Gigantick Men does not answer the terror of their Bulk and Figure; they are prest men, that enter the Service against their Wills, and are plac'd in the Front, like a *Swiss* painted upon a Door, for shew, not action. 'Tis true, they are forc'd to appear with their Fire-locks, and give one charge, but 'tis, like a *Moorfields* Volley, without Ball, or Bloodshed.

Plato's  
Authority  
consider'd.

The Leaders of these are a Triumvirate of Antient Greek Philosophers, *Plato*, *Xenophon*, and *Aristotle*. The first of these appears not in person, nor has his proxy much to say for him, that I can find. Yet as little as 'tis, he ought to have produc'd his Credentials, or his Voice may fairly be protested against. For a hear-say Evidence ought at least to be as well attested, as a Nuncupative Will to make it authentick. But, after all, what is it that he says, or rather that *Eusebius* says for him? Why, *that Plays raise the passions, and pervert the use of 'em, and by consequence are dangerous to morality.* But since he has not thought  
fit



fit to specify either the nature or measure of the danger, thus consequentially portended to morality, we need not amuse our selves any longer about it.

Much such another doughty Authority is that of *Xenophon*. \* The *Persians* Xenophon. \* Ita de veneris etiam rebus advalde juvenes verba non facimus, ne accidente ad vehementem in eis libidine, immodice huic libidini suae indulgeant Cyropæd. lib. p. 34. (he says) won't suffer their youth to hear any thing, that's amorous or bawdy. They were afraid want of Ballast might make 'em miscarry, and that it was dangerous to add weight to the Byass of nature. This quotation is strangely drawn in; it does not so much as squint towards his purpose. Here's no mention of any thing relating to the Drama. Bawdry indeed was forbidden to be talk'd to those, whose Reason was not yet grown sturdy enough to curb the looseness of their Appetites in those Countries, where the heat of the Climate, and the warmth of their Constitutions inclin'd 'em very early, and hurried 'em very precipitously to irregularities of that nature. But if this passage wou'd not serve his Cause, it wou'd his vanity and ostentation of reading, and therefore was not to be slighted.



*Aristotle.*

Of as great service is the Authority of *Aristotle*, one single doubtful expression of whose, he would wrest to the overthrow of one of the most elaborate and judicious of all that great Philosophers works ; I mean his Art of Poetry; in which he has taken the pains to prescribe Rules for the more easie and regular composition of Dramatick Poems; which certainly had been in him as well a scandalous, as a ridiculous labour, if he had not thought the practice of 'em allowable. But he's so far from any such indifference, that he frequently, both in that piece, and other parts of his Works, commends the writing of Dramatick Poetry, as the noblest exercise of the mind. Nor do we find any where in the works of that Philosopher, *who* (by this Author's own confession) *had look'd as far into humane Nature as any man*, a greater profusion of Rhetorick than in the praise of Tragedy, which he takes to be the highest exaltation of humane Wit.

*Plays forbidden to young People upon the score of the temptations from the Company.*

As for this passage, which Mr *Collier* has pickt out, and levell'd at the Comedy of our Age, it amounts to no more than

than a general \* caution against trust-  
 ing youth into promiscuous Company,  
 such as resorted to publick places, till  
 they were sufficiently fortify'd against  
 the danger of Corruption, to which  
 they might thereby be expos'd. *Drunk-*  
*ennes* was the Vice, which the *Phil-*  
*sopher* particularly instanc'd in, by  
 which he plainly shews himself appre-  
 hensive of the Company, not of the  
 Play; and therefore he would not have  
 young people trusted with the liberty,  
 and opportunity of contracting an ac-  
 quaintance, before they were arriv'd  
 at some tolerable maturity of Judgment.  
 But Mr *Collier* with a dexterity peculiar  
 to himself, palms the general term  
 of *Debauchery*, for the particular one  
 of *Drunkenness* upon us, that the suspi-  
 cion might thereby be shifted from the  
 Audience to the Performance.

To back this, and cover the convey-  
 ance, he brings another Authority as  
 little to the purpose, concerning the  
 force and power of Musick, from  
 whence he concludes, that *where the*  
*Representation is foul, the thoughts of the*  
*Audience must suffer.* What must they  
 suffer? Would the Musick, (as power-

\* Adolef-  
 centulos  
 autem &  
 Iambo-  
 rum & Co-  
 mediarum  
 Spectato-  
 res esse  
 lex prohi-  
 beat, prius  
 quam ata-  
 tem acci-  
 gerint, in  
 qua & ceteris  
 accubari  
 iam licu-  
 rit, & ab  
 omnibus,  
 vel ebrie-  
 tatis, vel  
 aliarum  
 inde nas-  
 centium  
 rerum in-  
 commodis  
 disciplina  
 liberos  
 efficiat.

Pol. lib 7.  
 c. 17.

View page  
 234.

ful as he supposes it) make the Audience drunk, or in love with Drunkenness? No, that was no Vice of the Stage, whatever it might be of the Spectators, yet even by them the Scene was not laid at the Theatres, tho the Plot might, and the Company perhaps be pickt up there. I suppose this Informer, as inveterate as his malice is against Play-houses, will scarce charge 'em as Schools of intemperance of that kind, 'tis not the practice of the Stage, not so much as behind the Scenes; and I believe he will acquit Pit, Box, and Gallery of it. For whatever some may bring in their Heads, he will find but few with Bottles in their Hands there. This made him wave instancing in the particular of *Aristotle*; the retail scandal wou'd not fit our Theatres, and therefore he lumps it among 'em by the general name of Debauchery, and tacks this Citation concerning Musick to it, which he hopes will give the Reader an Idea more serviceable to his Cause, than *Aristotle* intended, and make a suitable impression upon him.

This

This Philosopher forbade the resort to Comedies, only to those whose virtues he durst not trust; not to hinder their diversion from the Stage, but to prevent their corruption from the Pit, as King Charles the 2d suppress'd Conventicles, for the sake of those, whose principles he suspected; not to disturb the Devotion of a few mistaken well-meaning Men, but to prevent the practices of many crafty ill designing ones.

' Tully cries out upon licentious Plays <sup>View p.</sup>  
' and Poems, as the bane of Sobriety, <sup>235.</sup>  
' and wise thinking: That Comedy  
' subsists upon Lewdness, and that pleasure is the root of all evil.

No one, I suppose, will defend Plays, <sup>Licentious-</sup>  
that are really licentious, or if they <sup>ness not</sup>  
seem to patronize any, wherein some <sup>defended.</sup>  
warm-headed Enthusiastick Zealots pretend to find or make some passages exceptionable, they are willing to leave those Passages, if really guilty, to the mercy of Mr Collier's Inquisition, and yet not deny their Countenance, and Encouragement to the prevailing merit of the main part of the performance.



But here I must needstake notice, that either Mr *Collier* or *Tully*, are extremely mistaken, or, which is all one to our purpose, that this quotation does not speak the sense of *Tully*. *Plautus* and *Terence* are the only Comedians of his acquaintance, whose works have been preserv'd to our times; and consequently are the only Standards, by which we can form any Judgment, or take any measure of the *Roman* Comedy before, or about *Cicero's* time. These

Mr Coll.  
Character  
of Terence  
& Plautus.  
View p. 20.

Mr *Collier* assures us are modest to a scruple, especially *Terence*, who has but one faulty bordering expression. ' *Plautus*, who is of all antiquity the most exceptionable, rarely gives any smutty liberties to women, and when he does, 'tis to Vulgar and prostituted persons. ' The men who talk intemperately are generally Slaves. The Slaves and Pandars seldom run over, and play their Gambols before women. *Plautus* does not dilate upon the progress, successes, and disappointments of Love in the modern way. This is nice ground, and therefore he either stands off, or walks gravely over it. He has some regard to the retirements of modesty, and

Ib. p. 15,  
16, &c.



'and the dignity of humane Nature,  
'and does not seem to make lewdness  
'his Business.

This is a very fair character from an  
adversary, a friend could scarce have  
given a more ample recommendation <sup>This Cha-  
racter in-  
sidious.</sup>  
upon this head. Here seems to be a  
run of Candour and Ingenuity, for at  
least a dozen pages together; the an-  
cient Dramatick Writers are treated with  
so much civility, 'tis all such Halcyon  
Weather, so fair a Sky, and so smooth  
a Sea, would tempt the cautiouslest Pi-  
lot from his Anchor; he would have  
no apprehensions of a Storm, while all  
was so serene above, and so quiet and  
calm beneath him. But this is all *out of*  
*Character*, the Author forces his temper  
to serve his design, and caresses the  
Ancients in pure spite to the Moderns,  
as cunning Statesmen sometimes court  
and cajole a Party they hate, only to  
make 'em their tools against another  
they fear, and so make 'em ruine each  
other, and save themselves both the  
trouble, and the *odium*. This honest  
Policy Mr *Collier* has made use of; for,  
having routed (in his own vain con-  
ceit) by the help of these Ancients,  
the

the present *Stage Poets*, he makes head upon his Confederates, and those, that in the entrance of his Book deserv'd no censure, in the conclusion of it are allow'd no quarter. The more plausibly and securely to put this Srratagem in execution, he takes care to destroy his own Authority in their favour, by that of much better men against 'em, or that are ( as he manages the matter ) at least in appearance against 'em.

*The A's-  
citation  
patch'd up  
of incohe-  
rent frag-  
ments.*

This Author is a sort of a *Long-lane* Writer, a Piece-Broker in Learning, one that tacks ends and scraps of Authors together to patch up a slight Authority, that hangs so weakly together, that it won't bear the fitting. Thus he has linkt together two or three ill sort-ed sentences out of *Tully*, that make as little to his purpose, as if he had quoted so many Propositions out of *Euclid*; the truth of which, tho every body might acknowledge, yet nobody can find the use of in this place. But he found the name of Comedy joyn'd with an invective, and therefore he was resolv'd, if he did not find it so, to make it of his Party, before he took  
his

his leave of it. \*Tully complains, that \* O præ-  
 the Poets gave Love, the author of so ma- claram  
 ny follies and disorders, a place among emenda-  
 the Deities, the irregularities of which tricem vi-  
 were the constant subject matter of the Co- tam, quæ  
 medies of his time. Amorem  
 flagitii, &  
 levitatis

autorem in Concilio Deorum collocandum putet ! De Comædiâ lo-  
 quor quæ si hæc flagitia non probaremus, nulla esset omnino. Quæst.  
 Tusc. lib. 4.

The severities of a harsh old Father, *The Inven-*  
 the amours of the Rake his Son, and *tion of the*  
 the intrigues of the Knave his Servant, *Roman Co-*  
 or the wiles of a mercenary Prostitute, *mick Poets*  
 generally made up the business of those *barren.*  
*Comedies.* Hereupon Cicero cries out,  
 that if 'twere not for these Love extrava-  
 gances, the Comick Poets would be desti-  
 tute of a Plot. In which he seems ra-  
 ther to tax 'em with barrenness of *In-*  
*vention*, than *Immorality*. 'Tis true,  
 the *Moral* of such designs cou'd not be  
 very extraordinary, nor cou'd any very  
 edifying doctrine of application be  
 rais'd from the usual *Catastrophe* of these  
*Plays*. For the Poet generally took  
 care, after he had embroil'd matters  
 beyond all seeming possibility of a re-  
 conciliation, to disentangle all by some  
 Pro-

Poetical  
Justice  
neglected  
by them.

*Providential* (if Mr *Collier* won't quarrel at the expression) *Incident*, and crown the young *Libertine* with his wishes, reconciling the Father to the Son, and the Master to the Servant. By this means Poetical Justice was eluded, and that which shoud have been the ground and occasion of *moral Instruction* lost. The *Antient Comedy* was not therefore so innocent as his Character, nor so lewd and impure as his corrupted Quotations wou'd make it.

Livy's  
Authority  
abus'd.

His next Authority is from *Livy*, whose Evidence, even tho it were faithfully reported by Mr *Collier*, comes not near our case. For *Livy* speaks here of the *Stage Representations* in general; but the *Drama*, properly so call'd, was not known amongst the *Romans* at the time of the Pestilence, when the *Ludi Scenici* were invented. But this is not all, he is not contented to make a false Witness only of this Historian, but he must add Forgery to Subornation, and put his hand to what was not his act and deed.

P. 255.

*The Motives are sometimes good, when the means are stark naught : That the Remedy in this case was worse than the Disease,*



ease, and the Attonement more infectious than the Plague.

These words *Livy* utterly disowns; \* *Sine car-*  
 \* he says, that the *Ludi Scenici* intro- mine ullo  
 duc'd upon this occasion, consisted of fine imi-  
 certain dances, or decent movements *tandorum*  
 to Musick, perform'd by Artists fetch'd *ex* *minum*  
 out of *Tuscany*, after the manner of *actu*, *Lu-*  
 their Country. *diones ex*  
*Hetruria*  
*acciti, ad*  
*Tibicinis*

*modos Saltantes, haud indecoros motus more Tusco dabant.*  
*Dec. l. l. 7.*

Where lay the force of the Contagi-  
 on in this? What danger of Infection  
 from a modest Dance? After this *Livy*  
 proceeds to shew what were the first  
 steps that were made towards the im- \* *Inter ali-*  
 provement of these *Ludi Scenici*, and *arum par-*  
 concludes his short account of their *va princi-*  
 earliest Gradations with this Reflection. *pio rerum*  
*quoque*  
 \* *Amongst other things that have risen* *prima ori-*  
*from small beginnings, I thought fit to* *go ponen-*  
*take notice of Plays, that I might shew* *da visa est,*  
*from how sober an Original this excessive* *ut appare-*  
*Extravagance, which scarce the wealthiest* *ret, quam*  
*Nations can bear, is deriv'd. This* *ab sano in-*  
*Mr Collier translates, The motives are* *itio res in*  
*sometimes good, when the means are stark* *hanc vix*  
*naught. 'Tis pretty plain, that 'tis not* *opulentis*  
*the* *regnis to-*  
*leabilem*  
*inlaniam*  
*venerit.*  
*Ibid.*



*The Luxury and Ex-  
pensiveness of these  
Shews, not their Im-  
morality, condemn'd  
by Livy.* the Immorality, but the excess of *Luxu-  
ry and Profusion* at these Shews, that *Livy* condemns, by his adding that *twas greater than the wealthiest Nations  
con'd well bear.* For 'tis to be suppos'd, that wealthy people have as much need of *Morality* as the poor, tho they are not oblig'd to the same measures of Thrift, and good Husbandry. Whether Mr *Collier's* construction and application of this passage be the effect of his Malice or Ignorance, I leave the World to judge.

\* Itaque  
Cn. Genu-  
tio, L. A-  
mylio ma-  
merco se-  
cundum  
Cois.  
cum pia-  
culorum  
magis con-  
quittio ani-  
mos quam  
corpora  
morbi af-  
ficerent,  
&c. Ibid.

The following is yet a more perverse misconstruction, to which both Malice and Ignorance have clubb'd their utmost, even to emulation, so that 'tis hard to distinguish which has the better title to it. *Livy* tells us \*, that the Romans were so solicitous about methods of appeasing the Gods, that the anxiety of it was a greater affliction to their Minds, than the disease to their Bodies. This our Remarker, who out of his superabundant understanding, knew better than the Author himself what ought to have been said, thinks fit to render thus, *The Remedy in this case is worse than the*  
Dis-

*Disease, and the Atonement more infectious than the Plague.*

Of the same stamp is the Citation from *Valerius Maximus*, whom he has quoted, whither with less Faith or Understanding, is matter of doubt, for he has given great cause to suspect both. This Author, speaking of the Prizes of their *Gladiators*, expresses his resentments of that barbarous custom, (in which Citizens of *Rome* were often butcher'd) after this manner. \**These things which were at first invented for the Worship of the Gods, and delight of Men, were converted to their destruction, staining both their Religion and Diversions, with the Blood of Citizens, to the Scandal of Peace.* 'Tis plain, that by the *Animosæ Acies* this Author meant nothing but the Nurseries of *Castarii*, and *Gladiators*, and that by the *Civilis Sanguis* he intended no more of it, than was spilt in *arena* at those Prizes in quality of *Gladiators* or *Castarii*, in which the Spectators had no concern further than in the barbarity of countenancing, and encouraging so cruel a practice.

*Valerius Maximus misquoted, \* Proximus militibus institutis ad urbana Castra, id est Theatra gradus faciendus est, quoniam hæc quoque sapientia animos acies instruxerunt ex cogitataque cultus Deorum, & hominum delectationis causa, non sine aliquo pacis rubore voluptatem, & religionem civilem sanguine, ienicorum portentorum gratia, macularunt.*

*Lib. 2.*

*This, Cap. 4.*

*Palseness and absurdity of Mr C——r's Paraphrase* This, tho bloody and abominable enough to give an abhorrence to honest considerate Heathens, won't suffice Mr Collier, he despises single Sacrifices, and calls for *Hecatombs*; he's for breathing the Veins of the State, and flucing the Vitals of the whole Commonwealth at once. *They were the occasion of Civil Distractions; and that the State first blush'd, then bled for the Entertainment.*

P. 235.

This is rare Paraphrasing, Mr. Collier allows himself a very Christian latitude in his interpretations. But less wou'd not serve his turn, the *Drama* and *Arena* lay at some distance in Old Rome, and therefore this Gentleman was resolv'd to correct the Map, and bring 'em together. But what occasion for bloodshed at a *Comedy*? Why Mr. Paraphraser wou'd insinuate, that the Spectators and the Actors, like *Don Quixot* and the *Puppets*, fell together by the Ears, and so embroiling the State, engaged the whole Commonwealth in a Civil War. If I could be perswaded of this, I should allow this Divrsion to be altogether as Antichristian, as Bear-baitings or Ridings, and could be content, that Mr Collier, like  
Hn.

*Hudibras* shou'd reduce both Actors and Spectators by force of Arms; the Prowess of the Champions seems so so exactly equal, that I see no cause to doubt, their Atchievements and Success proving parallel.

He concludes (says our Paraphraiser) *ibid.* the consequence of Plays intolerable; and that the Massilienses did well in clearing the Country of 'em. This conclusion not to be found in Valerius.

Where he finds this conclusion I can't tell, I am sure not in either of the Chapters cited by him, nor I doubt through the whole Book. But he's a Discoverer, and has good eyes, that will shew him at a vast distance what others can't see with the help of the best Telescopes. What he says of the *Massilienses* (as he calls 'em) is no more to his purpose, than the former Evidence against the Gladiatorial Shews. *Valerius Maximus* in his sixth Chapter says \*, *That the Marseillians were a very severe People, that would not suffer the Mimicks to appear upon their Stage, whose business generally it was to present the acti-* \* Eadem Civitas (viz. Massina) severitatis cultus acerrima est:

*Nullum aditum in Scenam Mimis dando, quorum argumenta majore ex parte stuprorum continent actus. ne talia spectandi consuetudo etiam imitandi licentiam sumat. Cap. 6.*



on of Rapes to publick view, lest the sight of such licentious Practices, shou'd debauch the Spectators to the Imitation of 'em.

Stage allowed at  
Marseilles.

'Twere needless to insist long upon this passage, having already shewn the vast difference between the *Mimick* and *Dramatick* Representations. I shall only observe, that this Author, by saying that the people of *Marseilles* deny'd the *Mimi* the liberty of their Stage, intimates that they allow'd the Stage there, tho under severer restrictions than at *Rome*. Now if they permitted it amongst 'em at all, there is no doubt but *Tragedy* and *Comedy* (which by the unanimous confession even of their Adversaries, were the most innocent, and instructive of all the *Ludi Scenici*) took their turns upon it.

Seneca's  
Authority  
morning to  
the purpose.

*Seneca*, who is next produc'd, has but little to say to the matter: He is a little angry that the *Romans* were so fond of their diversion, as to bestow their whole time upon it, and neglect the study of *Philosophy*, and the improvement of their Reason. Nor was his complaint unreasonable; for the *Romans*, who were never much addicted to *Philosophy*, or any kind of

*Spe*

*Speculative Learning*, were yet more averſe to 'em than ever under the Reign of *Nero*, when all ſorts of Arts and Literature, thoſe excepted which contributed to the Prince's pleaſures, lay under publick diſcouragement; on the other hand, the Stage, and all thoſe Arts that gratify'd and indulg'd the Sences, had not only the Countenance, but the Practice and Example of the Emperor himſelf to encourage 'em, and to excel in any of 'em was the high road to his Favour, and to Preferment. It is not therefore to be wonder'd, if the *Roman* Youth under that general corruption ſlighted thoſe Studies, the ſeverity of which made 'em as well unpalatable as unregarded. Nor are we to be ſurpriz'd, if *Seneca* declaim'd againſt theſe Entertainments, which drew away, and alienated the minds of the People from thoſe Studies, upon the merit of which he peculiarly picqu'd himſelf.

The ſumm of this *Philosopher's* Evidence amounts to no more than \* that \* *Nihil*  
vero tam  
*damnoſum bonis moribus, quam in aliquo ſpectaculo deſidere;*  
*tunc enim per voluptatem vitia facilius ſurrepunc. Epict. 7.*

he thought Idleness a great corrupter of Manners, and that the Shows in use among the *Romans*, contributed to the making the people Idle, and tainting 'em with Luxury, and thereby rendering 'em more dispos'd to Vice. His charge against the Shows is in this place general, and respects indifferently any of 'em, many of which were in their own Natures innocent, and void of offence, yet were equally submitted to censure in this passage with the most scandalous *Seneca* was not so mean a Judge of Men, or Things, as to think all their Shows equally reprehensible, but he found all liable to the same abuse, that is, detaining the people from their business, and giving them too great an itch after Diversions. But this had not been worth our notice, were't not to shew, that our modern *Reformer*, tho' he has been us'd to greater Stakes, can play at small Game rather than stand out. For in the latter part of this short Citation he has made a shift to steal in two falsifications \*.

It is proved.

\* Tunc enim per voluptatem, &c. p. 235.

*For there Vice makes an insensible approach, and steals upon us the disguise of pleasure.*

Here

Here he wou'd insinuate that the Vice, of which the *Philosopher* seems so apprehensive, was of the growth of the place, to which purpose he translates the words, *Tunc enim, For there*, by which he endeavours to make the infection local, and renders the words, *Per voluptatem, In the disguise of Pleasure*, that it may seem to come artificially, and industriously recommended. Whereas, all that he says imports no more, than that, when men's Minds, by the flattery of those Diversions, were disarm'd of that severity, that the *Stoicks* (of which Sect he was) think requisite to the guard of Virtue, they were more easily prevail'd upon, and led away by vitious inclinations.

There are yet behind in the Train, *Tacitus, Plutarch, Ovid*, and Mr. *Wycherley*, whom (whether to shew his Judgment or his Manners I know not) he has rankt amongst, and under the head of *Pagan* Authorities; and truly I think he may as well make a *Pagan* of him, as an Evidence in this case. But that ingenious Gentleman ought not to take it amiss; for since all those great Men of Antiquity, nay, even the *Fa-*



thers themselves, the *Worthies of Christendom*, the *Flower of Human Nature*, and the top of their Species, are obliged every one of 'em to wear a Fools Coat, he has the less reason to repine at the Livery.

Tacitus,  
 &c. im-  
 pertinently  
 cited.

These are all summon'd to make up the Parade of Learning, and have no more business than an Ambassador's Coach of State at his publick Entry. Tacitus tells us, that Nero did ill to make the necessities of decay'd Gentlemen pimp to the betraying of their honour and dignity. And that the Germans did well to keep their Wives out of harms way. The complaint of Tacitus is nothing to us; his Caution indeed may be of service, as matter of instruction to Mr Collier, and his Protestants, if he has any, who I hope will reap the benefit of the German Example.

Plutarch thinks, that Licentious Poets ought to be checkt: Ay, and licentious Criticks too, and corrected into the bargain: tho *Sancha Pancha* and *His Critick* were both submitted to the lash, till one learnt Wit, and t'other Manners, and both Modesty. For sawcy  
 Reformers,

*Reformers*, as well as lewd *Poets*, require abundance of Discipline to keep 'em within bounds.

*Ovid*, and Mr *Wycherley*, as Poets, <sup>Ovid and</sup> and Men of Wit, may be joyn'd, tho' <sup>Air Wy-</sup> not as Heathens; and their Evidence, <sup>cherly say</sup> being exactly of a piece, is the more <sup>nothing a-</sup> properly consider'd together. This <sup>gainst the</sup> amounts to a proof, that at the Thea- <sup>Stage, but</sup> tres, as well as at all other places, where <sup>the Audi-</sup> there is a promiscuous resort of company of both Sexes, the business of Intrigue will go forward. It were much to be wish'd, that no body came to the *Play-house* for a less innocent diversion, than that of the *Stage*; to *Churches* and *Conventicles* with a less pious intention, than that of *Devotion*; to the *Park* for a less wholesome refreshment than that of *Air*, &c. But 'tis as much to be fear'd, that this universal Reformation will never be brought about, till the accomplishment of the Prophecie (if I may call it so, without offending Mr *Collier*) of one of our Poets

*Till Women cease to Charm, and Youth  
to Love.*

*Too great  
severity of  
no service  
to Morality.*

So long as there are appetites, there will be means found to gratify 'em. I won't deny, but that the promiscuous conflux of people of all Ages, Sexes, and Conditions, facilitates enterprizes of this nature. But I question whether an absolute restraint wou'd not more inflame the desire, than it cou'd prevent the practice; and whither the Morals of the Public wou'd not suffer more by vitiating the Imaginations of the People in general this way, than they cou'd gain by the severest methods of prohibition the other. *Spain.* and *Italy* are Countries as jealous and vigilant in this point, as any in the world, and yet the people so generally lascivious, that there is no place where Virtue has less interest in the Chastity of either Sex. Whereas on the contrary, in many places under the *Line*, where the People go constantly naked, the familiarity of the Objects takes away all wantonness of Imagination, which the artificial difficulties of some Countries promote.

But *Ovid*, it seems, does in some measure plead guilty, and owns, that  
not

not only the opportunity \*, but the  
business of the place sometimes pro-  
motes lewdness. Nor is it to be won-  
der'd at, since some of the representa-  
tions there were so scandalously lewd,  
as to give offence to the loosest of their  
Poets. \* *Martial* tells us \*, that he saw  
the Story of *Pasiphae* acted upon their  
Stage. But these were the Representa-  
tions of their *Mimi*, the scandal of  
which reflects no way upon the *Drama*,  
either Antient or Modern, and will  
therefore give us no occasion to dilate  
upon 'em here.

I have at length run thro all his pri-  
vate Authorities against the Stage,  
wherein I can't find so much as one,  
which is not either impertinently, or  
falsely cited, as I doubt not, but will  
upon collation appear. For which rea-  
son I have all along put the words of  
the Original, or of the most approv'd  
Version in the Margin, that they might  
without trouble be collated, and my  
charge justified. He owns, that he *has*  
*taken the liberty of throwing in a word or*  
*two, (in translating the Fathers) to clear*  
*the Sense, to preserve the Spirit of the*  
*Original, and keep the English upon its*  
*Legs.*



*Legs.* I hope by this it appears, that he has *confounded the Sense, corrupted the Spirit*, and set the *English upon Stilts*. His Modesty's too plain a counterfeit, to cheat those that are not wilfully blind. 'tis so slightly wash'd over, that the Brass appears at first view; so that whatever denomination he may give it, like an *Irish Half Crown*, 'twill soon fall to its intrinsic value. After all, his pains in citations are as unluckily bestow'd, as the Malefactors Fee, who, after he has brib'd the Ordinary, is call'd to read over again to the Court, and suffers at last for his ignorance.

To close all, and crown his Victory, Mr *Collier* gives us some *State Censures* (as he calls 'em) to shew how much the Stage stands discourag'd by the Laws of other Countries, and our own.

P 240.

To begin with the Athenians. This People, tho none of the worst Friends to the Play-house, thought a Comedy so unrespectable a Performance, that they made a Law that no Judge of the Areopagus should make one.

The Athenians, the greatest friends in the world to the Stage.

'Tis something surprizing to find the Authority of the Athenian State produc'd against the Drama, of which they

they of all the people of the world were the greatest Encouragers. And this very Law, which is urg'd against *Comedy* in particular, is an argument of the general Esteem it was at that time possess'd of. For, had the Writing of *Comedy* been so unreputable a performance, as Mr *Collier* from this passage of *Plutarch* wou'd insinuate, there had been no reason to suspect, that any of the Judges of the *Areopagus* wou'd have been so madly indiscreet, as to have forfeited his Character and Reputation, by so open and publick a Scandal; and consequently a provision by Law against a folly of that nature, must have been as senseless a Caution there, as an Act here wou'd be, to forbid any of the twelve Judges dancing upon the Ropes, or tumbling thro a Hoop in publick.

But this Law makes directly against the purpose it was quoted for, and seems plainly to argue, that *Comedy* was in so great reputation amongst em, that persons of the highest condition sought the applause of, and made their court to the people by performances of that nature. For which reason they found it necessary to restrain their Judges by

*This Law  
a direct  
Argument  
against Mr  
Collier.*

a Law, from running into those popular amusements.

That these Performances were not in fact dishonourable amongst the *Athenians*, might be made appear from a million of instances, were it necessary. But the credit that *Aristophanes* had among the *Athenians*, which was powerful enough to ruine *Socrates*, is singly sure sufficient to destroy an assertion so weakly founded. So far were they from having *Comedy* in disgrace, that they encourag'd, and maintain'd it at vast expence to the Publick, and thought it so proper an instrument of Reformation \*, that they gave it free liberty of Speech, and priviledg'd it to say any thing, and of any body by name; and this not by connivance, but by Law; there lay no Action of Scandal either against Poet or Actors.

\* Apud  
Græcos  
fuit Lege  
concessum  
ut quod  
vellet Co-  
mædia no-  
minatim, &  
de quo  
vellet di-  
ceret. Cic.  
de Rep.  
apud S.  
August. de  
Civitate dei,  
cap. 9.

The old  
Comedy of  
the Greeks  
exceeding  
licentious.

This probably gave occasion to the excessive liberties of the old *Comedy*, which at length grew so offensive, as to make way for a Reformation, and the introduction of the new *Comedy* upon the *Athenian* Stage. And here the reason why the *Areopagites* were not allow'd to meddle or engage in *Comedy*, appears pretty plain;

plain ; for the Liberties, allow'd to the old *Comedy*, naturally engag'd 'em in Parties, Factions, and personal Quarrels, which a Judge ought, to the utmost of his power, to keep himself clear of. Beside, the ancient *Dramatick* Writers were generally Actors in their own Plays, which by no means befitted the gravity of a Judge.

These reasons (since *Plutarch* is silent) *Comedy*, may suffice to shew, that the *Athenians* <sup>why no</sup> might have a very great honour for <sup>proper ex-</sup> their Comick Writers. and yet forbid <sup>cise for a</sup> their Judges to be of the number. The <sup>judge.</sup>

Avocation from their proper Studies, the Laws of the Republic, the quarrels, and consequently the partialities they were by the exercise of that sort of Poetry liable to be engag'd in, and the Indignity to their Office, are sufficient to justify such a prohibition, even amongst a people, that had the highest respect for all other persons that excell'd in this kind.

Nor was their kindness extended only to the *Drama* ; for the *Bacchanalian* Games, even after the abdication of Tragedy and Comedy, tho they held not an equal rank with the other, yet had some share of their favour ; and *Æschines*, who, according to the testi-



\* *Locata* testimony of \* *Demosthenes*, and † *Plu-*  
*Opera tua* *tarch*, was but a third rate Actor \*, yet  
*illis Histri-*  
*onibus, qui* was so well consider'd by the State, as  
*suspiciosi* to be sent on several Embassies, and  
*cognomi-* particularly to conclude a Peace with  
*nantur*, *Philip* of *Macedon*, than which the State  
*tercias* *Philip* of *Macedon*, than which the State  
*partes ac-* could not have given him a more ho-  
*titabas.* nourable Employment.  
*Demosth.*

*Orat. de*

*Coron* : And in the same Oration he calls him *Tertianum Histrio-*  
*dem.*

† *Æschines* *tercias partes* in *Bacchanalibus* apud *Aristodemum*  
*astitavit.* *Plut. Æschine.*

\* *Æschines* *legationes obiit*, & *multas alias*, & *ad Philippum* de  
*pace.* *Ibid.*

This, I suppose, may almost amount to a demonstration, that the *Athenians* had no such scandalous opinion of the Stage, as Mr *Collier* wou'd insinuate, making even *Plutarch* himself Judge in the case. It wou'd be impertinent after this to insist upon the great Employments, with which *Sophocles*, and some other of their Poets were honour'd; since the already mention'd honours and privileges are a sufficient evidence of the Publick Esteem.

His next State Opinion is that of the  
*Opinion of* *Lacedemonians*; and here after a flourish  
*the Spar-* of his own, he appeals to *Plutarch* again.  
*tans-*  
*P. 240.* *The Lacedemonians, who were remarka-*  
*ble*

*ble for the Wisdom of their Laws, and Sobriety of their Manners, and their breeding of brave Men: This Government won'd not endure the Stage in any Form, nor under any Regulation.*

I find, if this Author can but make his reading appear, 'tis no matter whether his sense does or not. Here is a Period of five lines and a half, without any principal Verb. But the Author is got into his Rhetorical strain, and 'tis no matter for Grammar. For when his Fury's up, *Priscian* had best stand out of his way; or take a broken Head quietly, or woe be to his bones.

But who told him, that the *Lacedemonians* were so remarkable for the Wisdom of their Laws? They were indeed notorious for the unreasonable severity and singularity of 'em. But I beg Mr *Collier's* pardon, if all Nature and Singularity ben't arguments of Wisdom, a certain sowre, singular *Remarker* may have written a Book to call his own understanding in question.

The Gentleman, I suppose, had heard of a famous Law-giver call'd *Lycurgus*, who was a *Lacedemonian*, and left his Country

*Theft. tolerated at Lacedemon,*

Country several wholesome Laws, the just commendation of which particular Ordinances he was resolv'd to transfer to the whole Body, or System of their Laws, in which Violence, Rapine, and Theft were not only tolerated, but recommended to practice and imitation; but all ingenious Arts, lay together with the Stage, under discouragement.

*Character  
of the  
Spartans.*

The *Spartans* were a people something of Mr *Collier's* Kidney, Cynicks in their Temper, Morose, Proud, and ill Natur'd, that hated mortally, as well the Improvements, as the Persons of their polite Neighbours the *Athenians*, were fond of their primitive Rust, and Barbarity, had an aversion to Elegance, or Neatness of any kind; their principal Virtues were a senseless inflexible obstinacy, whether in the right or wrong, and a sullen sufferance under Adversity. They were in short incorrigible Humorists, a people that would neither lead nor drive, men that were as hard to be perswaded to reform an old abuse, as the *Irish* formerly to leave off drawing by their Horses Tails, or a *Spaniard* would be to part with his Mustachio's, or Mr *Collier* to retract

tract an Error. This Frame and Constitution of mind, might perhaps recommend and endear 'em, as it seems to ally 'em to a person of the Authors complexion.

But why did this *Scourge* of the Stage \* Coma-  
 suppress the reason of this Aversion of dias, &  
 the *Spartans* to the *Drama*? Was it Tragædias  
 not for his purpose? Well, if he's re- non ad-  
 solv'd not to to tell us, *Plutarch* is bet mittebant  
 ter natur'd, and will. He says, \* that Lacones,  
 the *Lacedemonians* allow'd neither Tra- ut neq; jo-  
 geddy nor *Comedy*, that they might not co, neq;  
 hear any thing contradictory to their serio, eos  
 Laws. quilegibus  
 contradic-  
 erent au-  
 dirent. In-  
 stit. Lacon.

Here was an Authority in appear- This Au-  
 ance as serviceable to his purpose, as thority fal-  
 the old broad Money was to the Clip- sified like-  
 pers, but he, like some of those uncon- wise.  
 scionable Artists, that when they had  
 clipt a Six-pence, woud clap a Nine-  
 penny stamp upon it, cou'd not be con-  
 tented with the advantage of diminu-  
 tion, but he by covetously endeavour-  
 ing to raise the value, spoiled the cur-  
 rency of his Authority.

This Government (says he) wou'd  
 not endure the Stage in any form, nor  
 under any Regulation.

F

What



Politeness,  
the Object  
on of the  
Spartans  
to the Dia-  
ma.

What warrant has he from *Plutarch* for this Assertion? *Plutarch* tells us, that they did not admit *Comedy* nor *Tragedy*, but he says not a syllable of Forms or Regulations. The *Lacedæmonians* were a rough unpolish'd people, that were afraid, if the study of Politeness (the inseparable companion of the *Drama*) were introduc'd, their Laws, which were as Clownish, and unlickt as themselves, shou'd be affronted, and therefore kept *Tragedy* and *Comedy*, like Enemies, at a distance.

All sorts of  
Plays not  
prohibited  
at Lacedæ-  
mon.

Lib. 4.

But what does he mean here by the Stage? Wou'd he insinuate, that all sorts of *Skews* and *Games* were prohibited? If so, his Position is absolutely false; for all the rough *Bear Garden* Play (if I may call it so) was not only tolerated, but very much encouraged by the State. Their Women too had their Religious Plays, a memorable story of which *Pausanias* \* tells. And 'tis probable, that the Plays in use over all the rest of Greece, were permitted there too in their Primitive Rudeness and Simplicity, conformable to the humour of the people, and the drift of their Policy.

In

In the exclusion of the *Drama*, they aim'd only to preserve that Martial Spirit, which by the whole course and method of their Education and Exercises, they endeavour'd to infuse into, and nurse up in their youth, which they were afraid the Delicacy and Luxury of the *Drama*, as 'twas practic'd at *Athens*, might soften, and that the Elegancy and Pleasure of those diversions wou'd breed a niceness, which wou'd insensibly create a disgust in their youth to the Manners and Customs of their Country, and consequently make 'em think their Laws harsh and unpolish'd.

It was not therefore the Virtue of the *Spartans*, nor their care of Morality, <sup>Morality, not the reason of</sup> that made 'em reject the *Drama*, but an <sup>rejecting</sup> austerity of temper, which render'd 'em <sup>the Stage.</sup> ambitious only of Military Glory. In which, notwithstanding their Neighbours and Rivals the *Athenians*, with all their Delicacy and Luxury, were their equals, if not superiours. What infection of Manners from the Stage, cou'd that State fear, which tolerated Theft and Adultery? Tis plain, their fear was, lest the natural asperity of their humours, which they industriously

ously cultivated, should be softened, and their minds enervated. For the same reason all sorts of Learning lay under neglect and discouragement.

Whatever were the reasons that induc'd 'em to banish the *Drama*, if *Virtue* was not, 'tis nothing to Mr *Collier's* purpose. As for their *breeding brave Men*, I believe they may be match'd from the opposite State of *Athens*, both for number and quality. But if the *Athenians* rivall'd 'em in Military Glory, they infinitely excell'd 'em in all other valuable Qualities, and had as much more Manners, as they had Wit or Wealth. So that if Mr *Collier* will needs have them for his Champions, I must oppose their old Antagonists to 'em, and leave them to decide the Fate of *Greece*. For I think the opposition as unequal, as that of *Ovid*,

*Mulier in Trojam, pro Trojâ stabat  
Apollo.*

The next step he takes is into *Italy*, and there indeed he endeavours to draw a mighty Republick into a League Offensive and Defensive. And here,  
by

by the means of St *Austin*, he draws *Tully* in ; but since *Tully* does not appear in *propria personâ* we shall not spend Time and Ammunition upon him, but pass on to *Livy* : Who, making his personal appearance, is more formidable.

*Livy's Authority considered.*

P. 241.

We read in *Livy*, that the young people in Rome kept the *Fabulæ Atellanæ* to themselves. They would not suffer this diversion to be blemish'd by the Stage. For this reason, as the Historian observes, the Actors of the *Fabulæ Atellanæ* were neither expell'd their Tribe, nor refus'd to serve in Arms. Both which Penalties, it appears, the common Players lay under.

*Postquam lege hæc fabularum ab ritu, & soluto iocores avocabatur, & ludus in artem paulatim vertebatur, Juventus histrionibus fabellarum actu relicto, ipsa inter se more antiquo ridicula intexta verbis jactitare cepit, quæ inde exodia postea appellata, consertæ; Fabellis potissimum Atellanis sunt, quod genus ludorum ab Officiis acceptum tenuit Juventus: nec ab histrionibus pollui passa est. Eo institutum manet, ut Actores Atellanarum nec triba moveantur, & stipendia tanquam expertes artis Ludicæ faciant.* Dec. 1. l. 7.

Here Mr *Collier* has us'd a piece of Ingenuity uncommon with him, and put the words, *Ab Histrionibus pollui* in the Margin to justify his Translation. This is a strain of fair play, that he has not been persuaded to come up to, since his first quotation from *Theophilus*



*Antiochenus.* Not but that he was satisfi'd of the reasonableness of the conduct, (as appears by his using it, when 'tis for his turn) but because he had cause to fear the service of it.

In this Translation is another of his elegancies of Speech: *Were neither expell'd their Tribe, nor refused to serve in Arms.* He means, I suppose, prohibited, or denied the liberty of serving in Arms: for *refus'd to serve in Arms* is not *English*.

*Ancient  
Romans  
an unre-  
fin'd Peo-  
ple.*

To understand this passage of *Livy* rightly, we must consider that the *Romans* in the Infancy of their State were a severe sort of people, not much unlike in that particular to the *Lacedemonians*, ambitious only of Empire, and solicitous for nothing so much as the glory of their Arms: This humour lasted some Ages, and grew and encreas'd with their acquisitions; every augmentation of their State animated 'em to new Conquests, and their Ambition rising with their hopes, success made 'em fierce and haughty. 'Twas the universality of this Spirit, (which wou'd be dangerous to any other than a Popular Government) that laid the Foundation,

dation, and was the Instrument of  
 their future greatness. To support,  
 and keep up this Spirit, all manner of  
 Arts here, as at *Lacedemon*, lay under  
 neglect and contempt, except such as  
 contributed to the forming of their  
 Youth to hardiness, and military vir-  
 tue \*. So that when there seem'd to  
 be a necessity of instituting expiatory  
 Plays, the *Romans* were such absolute  
 strangers to things of that nature, that  
 they were forc'd to fetch Artists out of  
*Tuscany*.

It is no wonder if the *Romans*, who  
 were a people very proud, and con-  
 ceited of their own performances, in-  
 treated all those Arts, and Artists,  
 which were not adapted to their pro-  
 per Genius with contempt, especially  
 after they had receiv'd those Improve-  
 ments, which render'd 'em more artifi-  
 cial, and consequently more difficult.  
 By which means the *Roman Youth*,  
 who at first began to imitate the *Tuscan*  
 Players, were forc'd to throw up those  
 refin'd diversions to their † *Slaves*, and  
 stick themselves to the old, rude, sim-  
 ple way of mixing indigested Verses,  
 and crude extempore raillery. Thus

\* Virtus  
 superstiti-  
 one animis  
 Ludi quo-  
 que Scenici  
 nova res  
 bellicolo  
 populo,  
 instituti  
 dicuntur.  
 Et ea ipsa  
 peregrina  
 res sunt.  
 Ludiones  
 ex Hetrur-  
 ria acciti.  
 Ibid.

\* Imitari  
 deinde  
 eos ju-  
 ventus, si-  
 mul incon-  
 ditis inter-  
 se jocularia  
 fundentes  
 versibus,  
 cepere. Ib.  
 Alling of  
 Plays first  
 left off by  
 the Roman  
 youth, be-  
 cause of the  
 difficulty.  
 † Vernac-  
 ularis Arti-  
 ficius. Ia.

Histrio-  
 cal, which  
 was called

the *Ludi Scenici* being refin'd, fell wholly into the hands of *Mercenary Players*, who were upon this occasion distinguished by the name of \* *Histriones*, the *Roman Youth* retaining to themselves only the *Fabula Atellana*, which, because of their rudeness and simplicity, requir'd no great skill or application, as the other did; which, for that reason, perhaps they were either too *Saturnine*, or too proud to learn of those, whom they esteem'd as *Vassals*, or *Slaves*.

That this was the reason of their giving over the acting their other Plays, and not any turpitude, or dishonesty in the things themselves, *Livy* himself declares, by saying \*, that after the introduction of the Fable, they became too artificial for the practice of their youth, and therefore reserving to themselves the *Atellana* only, they left the rest of the Shews to those that made it their sole business.

'Tis observable, that the Historian in this account of Plays includes not the *Drama* at all; for he speaks here only of the Fables, which, after the *Satyræ*, were introduc'd by one *Livius*, and

\* *Vernaculis Artificibus quæ Histrionibus*  
*o*  
*verbo Ludionibus*  
*batur*  
*f. ionibus*  
*non*  
*im.*  
*Ibid.*

\* *Postquam lege*

and were repeated in Verse with action and gestures to Musick. *Tragedy* and *Comedy* were not known to the *Romans* till some ages after, the progress of their Arms had not made them acquainted with the Learning of *Greece*, and the Wealth and Luxury of *Asia*.

This mark therefore of Infamy, which was set upon the *Histriones* (from which (as Mr *Collier* observes) the Actors of the *Fabula Atellane* were exempt, can't properly stick upon the Actors of *Tragedy*, and *Comedy* as such, that Law having been made long before the *Drama* was brought to *Rome* from *Greece*.

But it was the misfortune of the *Drama* to make its Publick Entry into *Rome*, not only long after this voluntary, and unanimous secession, or separation of the Youth of *Rome* from the *Mercenary Players*, but even after the Law had branded these latter with Infamy and Disgrace, by excluding 'em from their Tribes, and denying 'em the liberty of bearing Arms. Whether, because making a business, and profession of diversion only, the *Roman* State, which encourag'd those exercises only that

Conj. Natural  
Reason  
why Players  
were noted  
with Infamy.



that tended towards hard'ning their Youth, for labour and military action, as partly thro inclination, so also out of necessity and State interest, being in its infamy surrounded by Neighbours more potent than themselves, and oblig'd to subsist almost altogether upon the purchase of their Swords, thought fit, by a publick discouragement, to deter their Youth from giving themselves up to an Employment, that so little suited the posture, and condition of their Affairs at first, and the vastness of their Ambition afterwards. Or, that after the first separation, occasion'd (as *Livy* hints) rather by the incapacity and unfitness of the *Romans* for Elegancy, and polite Exercise, the practice of the Stage, fell wholl into the hands of Slaves, and Mercenary Foreigners, to joyn with whom, the Magistrates and People, who were extremely proud, and jealous of the honour, and dignity of their Citizens as such, thought it so great an indignity and debasement that they made provision by this Law against it. Or, lastly, that their *Mimes* & *Pantomimes* were already, before the making of this Law, arriv'd at that lewd height of impudence, that we have already  
 taken

taken notice of, which obliged the Government to take this method to fright their Citizens from mixing in the practice of such impurities.

Of these Reasons the two first seem joynly to have contributed to the production of this Law: and *Livy*, tho he does not formally assign any reason for this severe usage of the Players, yet seems implicitly to intimate 'em to us in the notice that he has taken of 'em, tho not as causes, yet as circumstances considerable at that time. The silence of *Livy* concerning any such licentiousness in their Shews at that time, is a sufficient argument against the last cause. For that Historian, who upon all occasions shews abundance of zeal for the honour of his Country, would not have fail'd to have done 'em justice upon this occasion, had this rigour been the product of their Morals, and regard to Virtue. It is apparent therefore, that this discouragement of the Shews, or rather this restraint of the Action to Servants and Strangers, was the result of their Policy, not Manners, and is therefore an impertinent instance to Mr *Collier's* purpose, who

*Two sins  
most probable.*

who I suppose writes for the Reformation of Men's Morals, not Politicks.

Drama at  
first necessi-  
tated to  
use the  
Actors of  
the Ludi  
Scenici.

'Tis probable, that when *Tragedy* and *Comedy* came upon the *Roman Stage*, being destitute of able Actors of a higher Character, they were necessitated to make use of the Actors of the *Scenic Shews*, who, tho us'd to Representations differing very much both in their manner and end, yet by their practice and pronunciation and gestures, had both Voice and Motion under great command; which made the exercise of the *Tragick* or *Comick Stage*, tho new and unknown to 'em before, not difficult.

The Actors  
of *Tragedy*  
and *Comedy*,  
therefore  
only call'd  
Histriones.

By this means the Actors of *Tragedy* and *Comedy*, who cou'd not be aim'd at by a Law made long before any such were in being, might yet be brought under the censure of it in quality of *Histriones*, or Scene Players before noted. Thus these different Characters meeting constantly in the persons of the same men amongst the undistinguishing Crowd, the Intamy of one might affect the other.

But

But granting the meaning and intention of that Law to reach the *Dramatick* Actors, and that using a craft, which submits 'em to those compliances, for which the other are censur'd ; they also are offenders against the design of it, and consequently are comprehended within the intent of it, and liable to the penalty. Yet even thus this instance, giving it all the scope that may be in the utmost latitude of construction, is no way serviceable to this Reformer's purpose. This would have appear'd very plain, had the Law itself, instead of the instance from *Livy*, been produc'd.

\* † The Pretorian Edict runs thus, \* *Prætorian*  
*Whoever appears upon the Stage to speak, an Edict.*  
*or act, is declar'd infamous. Which La- † Infamia*  
*beo expounds thus. The Stage is any notatur*  
*place fitted up for the use of Plays, where qui Artiste*  
*any one is to appear, and by his motion dicæ, p ro-*  
*make himself a publick Spectacle. nunciandi-*  
*ve causa*  
*in Scenam*  
*prodierit.*

*Scena est, ut Labeo definit quæ ludorum faciendorum causa quolibet*  
*loco, ubi quis consistat, moveaturq; spectaculum sui præbiturus,*  
*posita est. L. 1. & 2. F. de iis qui notantur infamia.*

This Law being conceiv'd in general terms against all that speak or act, upon the Stage for the diversion of the



the People, seems indeed naturally to include *Comedians*, and *Tragedians*, who do both speak, and act upon the Stage, and make a show of themselves to the People too. Yet it does not serve our Adversaries cause at all, who must shew, that their Profession was branded for the Immorality of it, or he talks nothing to the purpose.

Labeo's  
position  
shews the  
intent of  
that Edit

This Exposition of *Labeo's* upon this Law, like the Preamble to one of our *Acts of Parliament*, may let us into the meaning of the Letter, and the motives that induc'd 'em to make it. What this Learned *Roman Lawyer* here observes as matter of offence, is only, that they did, *Specululum sui præbere*, make a shew of themselves for hire; which the Pride of the *Romans* might very naturally make 'em think to be a Prostitution of the Dignity and Character of a Citizen of *Rome*, which deserv'd to be punish'd with the privation of that which they had dishonour'd.

MrCollers  
disingenu-  
ity in this  
point.

To secure this point, the words, *ab Histrionibus pollui*, which he renders to be b'emish'd by the Stage, are (as has already

already been observ'd ) put into the Margin, by which he hopes to cast that blemish upon the Morality of the performance, which in strictness regarded only the Persons, and Dignity of the Actors, and that not upon any Moral, but a Political Consideration. By these Instances it may appear, what violence of Construction is used to rack and torture these antient Authors to confess, and depose against their Consciences. Stretching the Text is nothing with him, to serve his purpose it must be dismember'd, that he may have the cementing the fragments as he pleases; by which means he has shewn 'em in more unnatural figures, than even *Posture Clark* knew; Heads and Tails are so promiscuously jumbled together, that the most familiar posture you find 'em in, is that of a Dog couchant, with their Noses in their A——s.

But if after all, this Censure shou'd reach the *Mercenary* or Hireling Actors only, and meerly upon that account, I think 'twill be pretty evident, that 'twas not the exercise of their Mystery that made 'em scandalous, but the Mo-  
The Roman Censure extended only to the Mercenary Actors or such.  
 tives

tives that induc'd 'em to it. To clear this point, let us look a little forward, and to the former Law, we shall find the following subjoyn'd.

\* Eos enim qui  
quæstus  
causa in  
certamina  
descen-  
dunt, &  
omnes  
propter  
psidium  
in Scenam  
prodeun-  
tes, famo-  
si esse  
Pegasus,  
& Nerva  
filius re-  
sponde-  
runt. L. 2.  
de iis qui  
notantur  
infamia.

\* *Those that enter the Lists for the sake of Gain, or appear upon the Stage for Reward, are infamous, says Pegasus, and Nerva the Son.*

Here 'tis plain that 'twas not the nature of their Profession that drew the censure upon 'em, but the condition of their exercising it, which was for hire, whereby they became *Mercenaries*. This disgrace, affecting only the *Mercenary* Actors, reflects no way upon the *Poets* of the *Drama*, and their Performances. For had they been scandalous, 'tis not to be imagin'd, that so many of the greatest men that ever *Rome* bred, and the tenderest of their honour, wou'd have amus'd themselves about Works, in which they must have employ'd abundance of Time, Learning, and Judgment, to forfeit their Reputation and Dignity.

Scipio and  
Laelius  
Writers to  
the Stage,  
affecting  
it.

*Scipio Africanus* and *Laelius* were publickly suspected to have assisted *Terence* in the composition of his Plays; and the Poet, when tax'd with it, is so far

far from vindicating his great Patrons, (which had it been matter of reproach and diminution of honour to those noble Persons, he certainly would have done) that he does in a manner confess the charge to be true, and with a dexterity, in which he was singularly happy, converts what was intended as an imputation, to a complement upon himself, and values himself more upon the condescension, and friendship of men of their high Character and Station, than upon the merit of his performance; which, this objection was rais'd to lessen, by dividing the honour.

*Julius* and *Augustus Cæsar*, are both said to have busied themselves at vacant hours in Tragedy; and even *Seneca* the Philosopher. However, Mr *Collier* has lately seduc'd him over to his Party, and made a Malecontent of him, was once very well contented, and easy at a Play, and that too, not a sober *Tragedy* or *Comedy*, \* but one of their *Noonday Drolls*, a kind of their *Ludi Senici*, more wretched and contemptible, than our *Smithfield Farces*, and less modest. Yet his Gravity was it seems refresh'd by it, tho he's grown

*Julius and Augustus Cæsar, and Seneca, &c.*

\* In meridianum Spectaculum incidit Speculans, & aliquid Laxamenti  
so Epist. 7.



so very squeamish, since his acquaintance with Mr *Collier*, that it would be a hard matter to reconcile him to a grave *Tragedy*, tho of his own Writing (before his rigid new friend, Mr *Collier*) some of which are suppos'd to be yet extant amongst his Namesake's Collection of *Tragedies*.

*Brutus*, who left behind him ( notwithstanding his fatal engagement in the assassination of *Caesar* ) as high an Idea of his Virtue, and as a perfect character of an excellent moral man, as even *Cato* himself, was as great an admirer and encourager of the *Drama*, as any *Roman* of 'em all. And *Tully* himself, who had as much Vanity and Pride as any man breathing, thought it no diminution of his dignity and character, to contract an intimate friendship with *Roscius* an Actor, and publicly to espouse his Interest, and defend his Cause, which a man of his vanity and caution would not have done, had the Censure of that Law upon his Profession, any way affected in the publick esteem the reputation of those among 'em, that had any personal merit, as *Roscius*, *Æsopus*, and some others.

But

But tho these, and many others of the most eminent among the *Romans*, were avow'd Patrons, and the suppos'd at least, if not the real Author of many of their Dramatick Pieces, yet our *Remarker* finds, that in the time of *Theodosius* all sorts of Players did not come up to the Reputation of those Great Men, and make the top figures of their time, and therefore he claws 'em away with another swinging Authority.

*In the Theodosian Code, Players are call'd Personæ inhonestæ, that is, to translate it softly, persons maim'd and blemish'd in their Reputations. Their Pictures might be seen at the Playhouse, but were not permitted to hang in any creditable \* place of the Town.*

*Law of the  
Theodosi-  
an Code  
considered.*

*P. 241.*

*In loco  
honesto.*

So says Mr *Collier*, but the Emperors *Theodosius*, *Arcadius*, and *Honorius*, by the Authority of whom this Law was enacted and continued in force, were somewhat less severe, and something more particular, and this Gentleman's Version of that Law, however soft he may pretend it to be, is no very fair one. Faithfully render'd it runs thus.

\* *Siqua in publicis Particibus; vel in his Civitatum locis, in quibus nostrae solent Imagines consecrari picturae, & de his vestibus humilis, & rugosis finibus Agitatore, aut vilem offerat Histrionem, illico revellatur: neque unquam post haec liceat in loco honesto personas in honestas ad notare. In aditu vero Circi, vel in Theatri prospectis ut collocentur, non vetamus.* *L. Siqua. Cod. de Spectac.*

*If, in the publick Porches, or other Places of the City where Statues use to be dedicated to us, the Picture of any mean habited Pantomime and Chariöeer with his ruffled Garment, or base Droll Actor be put up, let it be immediately pull'd down: nor shall it be lawful for the future to represent persons of such despicable Characters in places of honour. But in the entrance of the Circus, or before the Stage of the Theatres they may be allow'd.*

*Meaning  
of the The-  
odosian  
Law. (*

This, when produc'd faithfully, and at length, is a worshipful Authority for Mr Collier's purpose, and the *Strowlers* all over the Kingdom must needs be extreamly mortified, when they reflect upon this Article, and find, that they are not yet so proper Companions for the King, as to be *bail fellow, well met* with him at a Publick Entry, or Audience. These Emperours, , it seems, thought it a sort of Indignity to have every Scoundrel *Hackney Coachman, Antick Tumbler, or Droll Actor* set up in

in Effigie by their own Statues, which in the times of Paganism were the objects of Solemn Worship, and afterwards of the highest veneration imaginable below it. They thought it a derogation to Majesty (as well they might) to have objects of ridiculous mirth and scorn plac'd so near 'em, and that the tickling to laughter, which these produc'd in the people, would lessen the awful Respect and Reverence expected to be paid to the other.

But not to carry matters so high ; *Parallel instances.*  
 If any one should take a fancy to set *Tom Dogget's* Effigies in his Sailors dress, familiarly cheek by jole in the same, or the next Niche to the King upon the *Exchange* (tho that be'n't so solemn a place of honour to our Kings, as the *Roman Porticus* to their Emperors) I suppose it would be resented as an affront, and be by order pull'd down. But if any man should take a fancy to the sign of the *King's Head*, and his next Neighbour to *Mr Betterton's*, I hardly think there would come any order from *Whitchall* to demolish or Lamb-black the Sign. And tho per-  
 G 3 haps



haps the two first may actually be found at *Murray's* or some other eminent Limners in the same Room yet I fancy the Painter will hardly incur the penalty of *Crimen lese Majestatis*, tho he should happen to have drawn 'em both with the same Pencil too. Princes, tho very zealous and tender of their honour, (as they have reason to be) yet are not half so nice and scrupulous as Mr *Collier*. These instances are exactly parallel to, and shew the difference between the drift of the *Theodosian Code*, and of his extravagant Paraphrase, which having already given the words of, I leave the Reader to judge of the Intention.

His instances from our *English Statutes* and the Petition of his Godly Citizens, I shall take no notice of, both because I find it sufficiently done already to my hands, and because I think 'em nothing to his purpose, as I think indeed of the greatest part of what I have already examined; but hitherto they seem'd to carry a face of Learning and Authority, which might mislead the unlearn'd, or surprize the unwary, if they were not warn'd in  
time

time of his disingenuity in Quotation.

His Authorities drawn from the several *Canons* of some *Councils*, are liable to the same reprehension with the rest of his Citations. But I am willing to compound with my Reader for my past prolixity, and to dismiss 'em without any further trouble, or examination; especially, since the formal Reasons of 'em are contain'd in the Objections from the *Fathers*, and already answer'd there. Since therefore the Idolatry, Lewdness, and Cruelty of the *Roman* Shews, (which provok'd the indignation of the *Fathers*, and the censure of those *Councils*) are banisht our Stage, I see no reason, why the Batteries, that were rais'd only to demolish them, shou'd be continu'd against it. But Mr *Collier*, and the Bishop of *Arras* are gotten into Confederacy, and are resolv'd, that tho the Theatres have long since perform'd their Articles on their parts, not to allow 'em the benefit of the Capitulation, and surprizing 'em, lull'd into security by a long cessation of Arms, to raze 'em utterly to the ground.

Quarrel to  
the Stage  
unjust.

*Delenda est Carthago*, was the word, the ruin of the Stage was agreed upon between 'em, but they wanted a fair pretence of quarrel; and therefore General *Collier* publishes a tedious *Manifesto*, fill'd with specious pretexts, to give a colour to his proceedings, and at the same time makes his Invasion. His quarrel to the Stage is like that of the Wolf to the Lamb, when the Prey was ready, the varnish of Justice was but a formality, that serv'd like a Hypocrite's Grace, to make his Meal the more decent; when the personal accusation proves too light, the Family differences are thrown into the Scale, and he runs 1500 years backward to make weight. Thus he makes a true *Italian* grudge of it, no change of Air, or Soil can make it degenerate, but it remains entail'd upon the Posterity, and successors of those, between whom it first began, tho the true reason why it ever began, were long since ceas'd, and perhaps forgotten.

But after he has, like a hot mettled Car, with a bad Nose, over-run the Scent, and cry'd it false thro all the Fields of Antiquity, he begins to be afraid

afraid of being whipt home, and therefore begins to draw towards it of himself. He's sensible, that the comparison betwixt the *Roman* and *English* Stages will not hold water, and to answer the leaks, he begins to ply the Pump, in order to keep it afloat, but it works as hard, and refunds as little as a Usurers Conscience.

*But it may be objected, is the Resem-* P. 277.  
*blance exact between old Rome and London? will the Parallel hold out, and has the English Stage any thing so bad as the Dancing of the Pantomimi? I don't say that. The Modern Gestures, tho bold, and lewd too sometimes, are not altogether so scandalous as the Roman. Here then we can make 'em some little abatement.*

Ay! is that your Conscience? can you make but little abatement? I find you've a Stomach like a Horse, nothing rises upon it, let it be never so provoking either, for quantity or quality. Dancing naked with Gestures, expressive of Lewdness between both Sexes at a time, and publick and open prostitutions in the representations of the Rapes and Adulteries of their Gods, were frequently the diversions of the

*Roman*



*Roman* Theatres. All these provoke no Qualms in him; he can scarce make any abatement. What wou'd a queasie Stomach'd Atheist give for his digestion.

*Stage dancing as now practiced is offensive to Modesty.*

But where's the Boldness, and Lewdness of the Modern Gestures; which Mr *Collier* makes bold to charge 'em with? I dare answer for the Audience, that cou'd they find any such thing in our Dancing, they wou'd be so much more reasonable than he, that they wou'd part with all that part of the Entertainment. But perhaps he suspects some intentional Lewdness, which is not expressed any way, and thinks that Monsieur *L'Abbe* is fallen into Sir *Fopling Flutter's* stratagem, and is sparing of his Vigour in private, only to be lavish of it in publick, and thinks no one Woman worth the loss of a Cut in a Caper, which is designed to make his Court to the whole Sex. This indeed is a dangerous design, and the discovery is worth Mr *Collier's* time and pains, tis a Plot upon the Virtue of the whole Sex; therefore if he has any such thing in the Wind, e'en let him follow his nose, and cry it away as loud as he pleases.

Well,

Well, but he begins to relent again already, these wamblings are a certain sign of Breeding, he's in a longing condition, that's plain. Come t'other strain Sir, and up with't. So now it's out.

*And to go as far in their Excuse as we* p. 277.  
*can, 'tis probable their Musick may not*  
*be altogether so exceptionable as that of the*  
*Antients.*

Really Sir this is very kind, and con-  
 descending. But do you truly, and Mr Coll.'s  
 from your heart think, that our Theatre Notion of  
 Musick is not altogether so pernicious, the extra-  
 as the Musick of the Antients? Now vagant  
 were I as cross, and captious as a Stage Power of  
 Reformer, and as full of Mr. Collier's Musick ri-  
 own Devil of Opposition, as himself, diculous.  
 I cou'd raise his, and divert the Spleen  
 of other People. But Foolery apart, I  
 desire to know wherein consists  
 this imaginary Force of Musick, that Collier's  
*Charms, and Transports, Ruffles, and* Moral Es-  
*Becalms, and Governs, with such an* say Vol. 2d  
*arbitrary Authority, that can make* P. 21.  
*drunken Fellows, as sober, and shame-* Ib. P. 22.  
*faced, as one would wish. If he can tell*  
*me this, crit mihi magnus Apoll, or,*  
*what's but one remove from him, first*  
*Knight*

*Knight* of his own order of the *Welch Harp*. Our Fiddlers find to their cost sometimes the want of this coercive power, but perhaps they cant play a *Darion*, and for that piece of Ignorance deserve the Fate they sometimes meet with, when they unluckily fall into the Company of these *Drunken Fellows*, and get their heads broke with their own Fiddles, in return for their Musick. Yet to do the Gentleman all the Justice, ay and the Favour too, that we can, in return for his late Civility, I must own, that I have seen at a Country Wake, or so, one of these Harmonious Knights of the Scrubbado, or a Melodious *Rubber* of *Hair* and *Catgut*, lug a whole Parish of asarrant Logs, as those that danced after *Orpheus*, by the Ears after him, to the next empty Barn, frisking, and curvetting at such a frolicksom rate, that they could scarce keep their Legs together; nay, such was the power of the Melody, that even the solitary deserted Gingerbread Stalls wagged after; and all this without the help of one illegal string, and but four very untunable ones. What could *Timotheus*, or even *Orpheus* himself do more. How-

However I wou'd not have the Gentleman swell too much in the Pride of his Victory, I wou'd not have him insult too soon. For, tho possibly these *Knights of the Harp* and *Catgut* might *know, how to arm a sound, and put force* Moral Essay vol. 2 P. 21. and *Conquests* in it, yet had there not been a Favourable Conjunction of Circumstances, the Harmony, as charming as it was, had not succeeded so miraculously, nor produc'd such extatick Raptures. For example, had this *Descendant* from *Orpheus* surpriz'd 'em at a time, when the *Holyday* Clothes were laid up in *Lavender*, when the Hay, or Harvest was abroad, or the Snow upon the Ground, and the Cattle wanted Foddering, when the Calf was to be suckled, and the Cheese to be set, he might have thrummed his Harp out, and cou'd no more have stirred those very Clods, that leapt as mechanically before at the first twang, as if they had been meer Machines (Instruments strung, and tuned to an Unifone) then he cou'd have raised the Turf, they trod upon, by vertue of *Ela*, and *F-fant*. The Critical Juncture mist, *Roger* had not jogged a foot out of his way, nor

Madge



*Madge* out of her Dairy, they had been as regardless of his Harmony, as a *London* Milk Maid, after the first week in *May*; an antient *Britton* might as easily have been charmed from his scrubbing Post.

*Power of the  
sick owing  
to contin-  
gent cir-  
cumstances.*

There are indeed certain opportunities to be found by those that skilfully watch 'em, wherein Mens Souls are to be taken by surprize, wherein they give themselves up wholly to the direction of their Senses, when Reason tired with perpetual mounting the Guard, quits her Post, and leaves 'em to be drawn away by every delightful Object, every pleasing Amusement. At these times Sound, Colour, Taste, and Smell have all an unusual Influence; a Face, a Voice, or any thing else, that gives us pleasure for the time, Commands us, and we are hurried, like Men in Dreams, we know not how, nor whither. Yet this is easily accounted for, without recourse to natural Magick, or any suitable Power in those Agents, that work upon us. Our Souls are at these times, like Vessels adrift, at the mercy of Waves and Winds, from what corner soever they blow;

blow; our Senses are the Compass they sail by, from whence those Blasts of Passion come, that drive us so uncertainly about, but 'tis without any peculiar inherent force of Direction more in one point than another.

Thus far Musick, as well as other <sup>Influence of</sup> things that gives us delight, and flatter <sup>sounds in-</sup> the Senses, may influence us. It may <sup>determi-</sup> <sup>nate.</sup>

when we are under a lazy disposition of mind, produce a degree of satisfaction something above Indolence, but the motions of it are languid and indeterminate, that incline us only to an unactive easiness of mind, a barren Pleasure, that dies without Issue, with the Sounds that begat it; so little danger is there that *it should be in the power of a P. 279.*

*few mercenary Hands, to play the People out of their Sences, to run away with their understanding, and wind their Passions about their Fingers, as they list. I suppose few will take it upon this Gentleman's word, that Musick is almost as dangerous, as Gunpowder; and requires no less looking after, than the Fress or the Mint.*

This Gentleman sure has a Noise of Musick in his head, that has put the Stumm in his Brain into a Ferment, and caused

caused it to work over into all this witty fancy and froth. He has been a Tale-gathering among the Antients, and would put his Romantick Rhapsody upon us for Authentick. But what is yet more unreasonable is, that without offering one Argument to prove either the reasonableness of his Opinion, or the reality of his Instances, he dogmatically asserts things monstrously, exceeding the stretch of the most capacious faith, and yet expects that, which alone is sufficient to destroy the credit of things infinitely more probable, the vast distance of time shou'd warrant the truth of them. As if he believed all Mankind to be proselyted to the Paradox of a certain Father *certum est quia impossibile.*

F. 280.

P. 179.

But if the Power of the Antient Muse was so great, as he would persuade us, certainly *Timotheus* was a Fool for suffering his harp to be seized for having one string above publick Allowance. For if altering the notes, were the way to have the Laws repealed, and to unsettle the Constitution, he might with a twang, instead of taking a string from his Harp, have put one about the Magistrates Neck, and  
for

for a Song have set himself at the head of Commonwealth. But this Author, who is all along a *Platonist* in his Philosophy, is in this point an arrant Bigot. The whole scheme and strain of the *Platonick* Philosophy, is very romantic and whimsical, and like our Author's works, savours in every particular more strongly of Fancy than Judgment, yet in nothing more, than in the imaginary power of Harmony, to which he ascribed the Regulation, and Government of the Universe, and other Powers more fantastical and extravagant, than that of the *Pythagorean* numbers.

*The Author  
a Platonist.*

Now were I in as cross a mood, and as much at leisure to be impertinent as this Admirer of the Antient Musick, who has ventur'd to affirm it as certain, *Moral Es.* that our Improvements of this kind, are *[47, Vol. 2.]* little better than Ale-house Crowds, with *P. 23.* respect to theirs. I cou'd with a certainty of Evidence, next to Demonstration, maintain just the Reverse of his Assertion, and prove that the Musick of the Antients fell infinitely short of the Modern in point of perfection, as well in Theory as Practice, and that,

H

waving



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H                      waving

waving the fabulous accounts, ( which none but an Enthusiastick Bigot can seriously insist upon ) all our Memoirs from Antiquity will scarce make the Harps of *Orpheus* and *Arion*, &c. to triumph over a Jew's Harp, or Rival a *Scotch Bagpipe*.

Not acquainted with the Subject he treats of.

P. 278.

But after all, it seems that he has been raving all this while in Pedantick Bombast, at he knows not what. He confesses that he is not acquainted with the *Play-House Musick*, and that he is no competent Judge. *I don't say this part of the Entertainment is directly vitious, because I am not willing to censure at Uncertainties.* How long, I wonder, has he been thus modest ? had he been thus tender all along, he had suppress'd his whole Book, and the truth had suffer'd nothing by the loss of it. But in earnest, is he deaf ? or does he wax up his ears when he goes to a Play, as (he says) *Ulysses* did, when he sail'd by the *Syrens* ? No, neither ; but, if we may believe him, he never comes there. *Those that frequent the Play-house are the most competent Judges.* Why tha's honestly said, they are so ; keep but to this, and there's some hope of

P. 278.

an accommodation. But alas ! tho his zeal is a little Aguish now, the hot Fit comes on apace, and then right or wrong, *He must say, that the performances of this kind are much too fine for the place.* <sup>ibid.</sup>

Tho he has never heard of one, nor <sup>His charge</sup> seen t other, yet he cries hang scruples, the Musick must be bawdy, Atheistical Musick, and the dancing *bold and lewd too sometimes.* Now whether he means that the *Fiddler* himself is an Infidel of a *Fiddler*, or that he has an unbelieving *Crowd*, he is desir'd to explain ; for they are both left to be catechiz'd by him. But as for the sounds produc'd betwixt them, care has been already taken to clear 'em, not only from guilt, but from all manner of meaning whatsoever. As for the dancing, which he calls bold, it may in one sense be allow'd him ; for it must be granted, that he that ventures his neck to dance upon the top of a Ladder, is a very bold Fellow. If this concession be of any use to him, 'tis at his service , whether the fraternity of Rope-dancers take it well at my hands or not. But for the Lewdness, I must remind him of his

H 2

appeal



appeal to *those who frequent the Play-houses*, (whom he allows to be) *the most competent Judges*. But as their Judgment in these matters appears to be indisputable, so the modesty of the better part of 'em at least, (I mean the Ladies) who are the particular favourers of this part of the entertainment, is unquestionable. Their countenance therefore in so plain a matter, which being a question of fact, admits of no other decision, ought to be lookt upon as a definitive Judgment against him, and a sufficient vindication of our *Stage-dancing*.

*Comparative Morality of the Vocal Music of the Ancient and Modern Stages.*

I should here dismiss this point without further debate, if I did not find him closing it on his side with a notorious false assertion concerning the comparative Morality of the vocal Musick of the Ancient and Modern Stages, which, not designing to resume this branch of the Controversie any more, I am bound here to take notice of, and rectifie.

P. 280.

*If the English Stage is more reserv'd than the Roman in the case above-mentioned. If they have any advantage in their Instrumental Musick, they lose it in their Vocal. Their Songs are often rampantly*

*pantly lewd, and irreligious to a flaming excess. Here you have the Spirit, and Essence of Vice drawn off strong scented, and thrown into a little compass. Now the Antients, as we have seen already, were inoffensive in this respect.*

Here again I am at a loss to know whether this is a fault of ignorance or design. But be it whether he pleases, the falseness of his assertion is unpardonably scandalous; for whether he has ventur'd to affirm beyond, or contrary to his knowledge, tis manifest he did it with an intention to impose upon his Readers, by asserting that which he could not know to be true, if he did not certainly know it to be false.

The Vocal Musick of the Antient *Antient Vocal Musick* Stage was of two sorts, one whereof was interspers'd among their Dramatick Writings, and consisted of Hymns, and Praises of their Gods, which were sung and danced by the Chorus to certain grave Aires and Measures. Here indeed the Poets must have been more impertinently and perversely lewd, than Mr Collier's own corrupt imagination can positively make the Moderns to be,

if they cou'd have found room for any thing very indecent; tho an ill natur'd Critick, with much less Gall or Straining, than Mr *Collier* has made use of, might shew, that they were not so absolutely inoffensive, as he affirms. The

*Chorus, its office.* Chorus represented the Spectators, and their business was to make occasional reflections upon the several incidents and turn of the Fable, which was the artificial Instrument, the Antient Poets us'd to convey the Moral into the Audience, and teach 'em what to think upon such occasions, and how to behave themselves in reference to their Gods and Religion, and were therefore suppos'd to speak the sense of the Poet, or what at least he desir'd should be taken for such. Now I dare answer for the meanest of those Poets, upon whom this Author has made his reflections, that taking our Estimate of their understandings by his own diminutive survey of 'em, there is not amongst 'em one so arrant a Blockhead, as under the circumstances of the Antients to have taken more liberty, than they did.

But

But if their Chorus was modest and harmless enough ; the other part of their Stage Vocal Musick will make ample amends, and make the lewdness of our Poets appear, as demure as a Quaker at a silent meeting. The Antients had lustier Appetites, and stronger Digestions, than the Moderns, and their Poets cookt their Messes accordingly, they did not stand to make minc'd Meat, or artificially to steal in their Ribaldry, and disguise it in nice Ragou's after the modern way ; they were for whole Services, substantial Treats of Bawdy. Nor do I find, that it recoil'd upon the Stomachs of the generality of their Guests for many Ages together. The Reader I suppose will immediately guess that I mean the *Ludi Scenici*, which *Their Mini-* made the Amours of their Gods, and Heroes their subject, in which the lewdest actions were represented in the lewdest manner, and sung in the most fulsome luscious Verse. Upon our Stage no such Practices are allow'd, if a light wanton thought happens to creep into a Song, 'tis not suffer'd to shew its face bare, but is presently maskt, and cloathed decently in Metaphor,

H + that



that many wou'd not suspect the modesty of it, and even the most squeamish can't take offence without offering violence ; for it comes into your Company like a bashful young sinner, she's civil company amongst sober people.

The Antients, 'tis plain, were not by abundance so scrupulous; if they had, those lewd Drolls had never been compos'd, much less represented. But they were for all naked, without the vail of Figure or Dress, they requir'd Nudities in Speech, as well as Action, the Audience went away with satisfaction, and the Poet with applause.

By this we may see, that our *Stage* upon the comparison is not so *rampantly lewd*, as Mr. *Collier* represents it, nor the ancient so inoffensive. To dilate upon this head, would be both improper and impertinent; but these few hints, which, all that are acquainted with the practice of the *Roman Stage*, know to be true, whether Mr *Collier* does or not, may suffice to shew what an unfair Adversary the Stage has met with; and to prove that he is not an upright, or not a competent Judge of these matters, in which he unauthoriz'd undertakes

undertakes to determine, and arrogantly obtrudes his false Judgment upon us.

Another of his objections to the Stage P. 281. in general, is *their dilating so much upon the Argument of Love.*

Upon this article he is very lavish of his Rhetorick, and lays about him in Tropes and Figures, he is got into his old road of declamation, and posts Whip and Spur thro his Common place upon the subject. His fancy, like a Runaway-horse, has got the Bit between her Teeth, and ramps over Hedge and Ditch, to the great danger of his Judgment; no bars or fences of sense or reason can stop her Carriere, till jaded and out of Wind she flags of herself. Here then, let us come up with him.

*His Objections from the Topick of Love, a Declamatory Rant.*

*I don't say the Stage fells all before 'em, P. 282. and disables the whole Audience: 'Tis a hard Battle, where none escape. However, their Triumphs and their Trophies are unspeakable. Neither need we much wonder at the matter. They are dangerously prepar'd for Conquest and Empire. There's Nature, and Passion, and Life in all the circumstances of their Action. Their Declamation,*

*climation, their Mein, their Gestures, and their Equipage, are very moving and significant. Now when the Subject is agreeable, a lively representation, and a passionate way of expression, make wild work, and have a strange force upon the Blood and Temper.*

*Meer Fren-  
v.*

What means all this unseasonable Cry *Fire, Fire*, where there is not so much as a spark? If the Audience were meer Tinder, they were out of danger. Sure the Author had Wildfire in his Brains, that the thoughts of the Players could put him into such an uproar. 'Tis granted the Actresses may appear to advantage upon the Stage, and yet their *Triumphs* and *Trophies* not be so unutterable neither. For as *dangerously* as they are prepar'd for *Conquest and Empire*, the highest of their acquests, that I could ever hear of, was a good keeping, which has fallen to the share of but a few of 'em; when multitudes of their Sex have arriv'd at greater matters without any such formidable preparations. However, here's *Mein*, and *Equipage*, and the Author seems afraid, lest the raw Squires of the Pit should take em for  
*Quality*

*Quality* in earnest, and be dazled with the lustre of the inestimable Treasure of Glass, and Tinsel, and so catch the real Itch of Love from their counterfeit Scrubbado. And truly there's as much reason to fear, they shoud be pursu'd for their Fortunes, as their Love off the Stage.

To answer this Rant of Whimsie and Extravagance seriously, were as ridiculous an undertaking as *Hudibras's* dispute with the Managers of his West Country Ovation, and by the sample we have of our Antagonist, the issue would probably be as cleanly. But if any one thinks an answer to this chatge necessary, he may see as much as it will bear, and more than it deserves, in a late Piece entitled, *A Review of Mr Collier's View, &c.*

He has yet another charge upon the Stageleft, and that is their encouraging of Revenge. *What is more common than Duels and Quarrelling, in their Characters of Figure? Those Practices, which are infamous in Reason, Capital in Law, and Damnable in Religion, are the Credit of the Stage. Thus Rage and Resentment, Blood and Barbarity are almost deified;*  
Pride



*Pride goes for Greatness, and Fiends and Heroes are made of the same metal. And thus the notion of Honour is mis-stated, the Maxims of Christianity despised, and the Peace of the World disturb'd*

One would think he had found out another passage in *Valerius Maximus*, and that the *Civilis Sanguis* was abroad again. But *Rome* contented him then, now nothing less than the Peace of the whole World must be disturb'd about a Bawble. Sure he thinks all the World of the *Country-Wife's* opinion, that the *Player Men are the finest folks in it.*

*Revenge  
not encour-  
aged by  
the Stage.*

But so far is Revenge from being encourag'd, or countenanc'd by the Stage, that to desire and prosecute it, is almost always the mark of a *Tyrant*, or a *Villain*, in *Tragedy*, and *Poetick Justice* is done upon 'em for it; it is generally turn'd upon their own heads, becomes the snare in which they are taken, and the immediate Instrument of their miserable *Catastrophe*. Thus in the *Mourning Bride*, *Don Manuel*, to glut his lust of Revenge, puts himself into the Place and Habit of his unhappy Prisoner, in order to surprize, betray, and insult his own pious, afflicted Daugh-

*Instance in  
the mourn-  
ing Bride.*

Daughter, over the suppos'd Body of her Murther'd Husband. In this posture Poetick Justice overtakes him, and he is himself surpriz'd, mistaken for him whom he represented, and stabb'd by a Creature of his own, the villanous Minister of his Tyranny, and his chief Favourite. Nothing is more common than this sort of Justice in *Tragedy*, than which nothing can be more diametrically opposite, or a greater discouragement to such barbarous Practices.

*Comedy* indeed does not afford us many instances of this kind ; *Rage* and *Barbarity* are Crimes not cognizable by her ; they are of too deep a Dye, and the Indictment against 'em must be preferr'd at another Bar. If she admits of any thoughts of Revenge, they must be such as spring from the lowest Class of Resentments ; that flow rather from a weakness of Judgment, or a perverseness of Temper in the Parties that conceive 'em, than from the Justice of the Cause, or the greatness of the Provocation. Accordingly they ought to have no great malignity in 'em, they ought to spend themselves in little Machina-

*Passion*  
not proper  
in Comedy.

chinations, that aim no farther than  
 the crossing of an Intrigue, the break-  
 ing of a Match, &c. and never to  
 break out into open violence, or ravage  
 in Mischief. The Passions have little  
 to do in Comedy, every one there ac-  
 cording to his capacity acts by design,  
 or carelessly gives himself up to his hu-  
 mour, and indulges his pleasure and in-  
 clinations. This equality of temper of  
 Mind, with the diversity of Humours,  
 is what makes the business of Comedy.  
 For while this general calm lasts, all  
 busily pursue their several inclinations,  
 and by various ways practise upon one  
 another. And the Man of Pleasure  
 follows his design upon the rich Knave's  
 Wife, or Daughter, while the other is  
 working into his Estate. The Cully is the  
 Sharper's Exchequer, and the Fop the  
 Parasite's, or Jilt's, &c. which, were  
 the Passions too much agitated, and  
 the Storm rais'd high, wou'd become  
 impracticable; the Commerce wou'd  
 be broken off, and the Plot wholly  
 frustrated. Besides that both the  
 Thoughts and Actions of Men, very  
 much disorder'd by Passion, or fill'd  
 with too deep Resentments, are natu-  
 rally

( III )

rally violent and outrageous, and absolutely repugnant to the Genius, and destructive of the End of Comedy.

I grant that some Passions, such as *Love, Jealousie, &c.* *Love, Jealousie, &c. how to be used in Comedy.* *Love, Jealousie, &c.* are frequently, and sometimes justly employ'd in Comedy; but then they are to be kept under, and must not be suffer'd to get the Ascendant, and domineer over Reason; if they do, they are no longer Comick Passions. Love must not carry 'em beyond Gallantry, and Gaiety of Spirit in the Pride of Success, nor further than a light disquiet, such as may excite their Industry, and whet their Invention under disappointments. Jealousie must not hurry 'em beyond their Cunning, or make their Impatience betray their Plot. Nor must their Anger break out into Flames, and push 'em upon rash unadvis'd Actions. Such Revenges therefore, as are the result of Passions so moderated, and circumstantiated, are allowable in Comedy; which can never produce any such terrible effects, as to deserve all these furious Claps of Thunder, which Mr Collier has discharg'd upon 'em.

Horace



Horace indeed tells us, that Comedy will raise its voice sometimes, and scold, and swagger violently.

Hor. Art. *Interdum tamen & Vocem Comædia tollit,*  
Poet. *Iratusque Chremes tumido delitigat ore.*

Exposition  
of Horace's  
Observati-  
on.

But this very Instance shews, that the Passion of Comedy shou'd proceed no farther than Scolding, or Menaces. Nor do these fit every one's mouth, a Father, a Husband, or a Master, when they conceive their Authorities to be out-rag'd, may be allow'd to vent their Indignation, to unload their Stomachs, and in the discharge of their Choler to break out into expressions of Threatning, or Reproach. But this is not to be allow'd upon slight Provocations, or to every Person in Comedy, who by their Place and Character can pretend to no such Power, or Authority. These Rants of Passion are not to be indulg'd amongst Equals in Comedy, much less to Inferiours; because such provocations naturally produce effects too great, and too like Tragedy.

*Chremes*, in the *Heautontimorumenos* of Terence, who is produc'd by Horace

as an example of the height of Comick <sup>Instance</sup> Passion, was a Husband, a Father, and <sup>from Te-</sup> a Master, injur'd (at least in his own <sup>rence ex-</sup> Opinion) and abus'd in all these capacities by his Wife, his Son, and his Slave ; his Authority slighted, and what was worse, his Understanding, (of which he was not a little conceited) affronted, and He practic'd upon, and made a Cully of by his Son, and his Slave, even in the exaltation of his Wit, and Cunning, by his own Plot and Management. These were provocations as high as Comedy could well admit, and consequently the rage, which they must naturally produce in a man of his Temper, and Opinion of his own Prudence, must be in proportion. Yet, what follows ? *Chremes* does not lose his Reason in his Anger, \* *His Son* (he tells you) *shall be reduc'd by Words to Reason : But as for Syrus, that Rogue, that had made him his Sport and his Laughing-stock, he would take such care of him, and put him in such a Trim, he should not dare*

\* Hic, ita  
ut liberos  
est a-  
dignis con-  
tutabitur.  
Sed Sy-  
rum— Si  
vivo adeo  
exorna-

tum dabo, adeo depexum, ut dum vivat meminerit semper mei : Qui sibi me pro ridiculo, ac delectamento putat. Non (ita me Dio ament) auderet facere hæc Viduæ mulieri, Quæ in me fecit.

to put his tricks upon a Widow hereafter, as he had done upon him. What is there in all this, that Mr Collier with all his Scruples about him can quarrel with? 'Tis true, a Scene or two after he falls upon his Son, in very opprobrious terms, and calls him Drunkard, Blockhead, Spendthrift, Rake-hell, &c. But his Fury spends itself in a few words, and he comes immediately to composition with his Son, and is easily wrought to forgive even Syrus too, so that all his fury is spent, not to revenge the affront receiv'd, but to reclaim his Son.

P. 283.

*Tragedy in  
the Judg-  
ment of A-  
ristotle.*

But Mr Collier's Resentments are of another Nature; *Rage, Bloud and Barbarity* are the Ingredients of 'em, and consequently they're no composition for the Ingredients of *Comedy*; and *Tragedy*, as we have already shewn, is no encourager of 'em, but just the contrary. I can't see how he can make 'em to be of the proper growth of the Stage. For *Tragedy*, by giving 'em so odious a Dress and Air, and so calamitous a Catastrophe, as it always does, takes the most effectual course absolutely to eradicate 'em, and to purge the minds of the Audience of those turbulent Guests. Upon  
this

this Prospect it was, that Aristotle pronounc'd so largely in favour of Tragedy, *That it made Terror and Compassion the instruments, by which it purified and refined those very Passions in us, and all of the like nature.*

Arist. Poet. lib. cap. 6.

σι ἐλίου χι

φός τε πρ-

φαίνετα ἔ

τὰν πρ.

ἰνυάτων

καθάρατον.

P. 283.

Duelling

and Ren-

counters a-

gainst the

Nature and

Laws of

Comedy.

But, if Tragedy be no Encourager of such Disorders, much less can Comedy, which meddles not at all with 'em, be with any colour of Justice accus'd. Comedy has nothing to do with either *Fiends, or Heroes*, whatever Stuff, or *Metal* they may be made of. 'Tis indeed a Fault to bring Duels and Ren-counters upon the Comick Stage, from which some of our Poets can't excuse themselves. But 'tis a Fault rather against the rules of Poetry, and true Dramatick Writing, than those of Morality. For, in Poetry as well as Painting, we are oblig'd to draw after the life, and consequently to copy as well the Blemishes as the Beauties of the Original; otherwise the finest colours we can bestow, are no better than gay dawbing. The fault therefore of the Poet lies not in shewing the imperfections of any of his Persons, but in shewing them improperly, and in the wrong



place, which is an Error of his Judgment, not his Morals, and wou'd be as great if he shou'd untowardly produce in *Comedy* the highest Examples of Heroick Virtue and Fortitude:

*Duel in  
Love in a  
Tub, against  
the rules of  
comedy.*

An Instance of this kind we have in *the Comical Revenge, or Love in a Tub*, of Sir George Etherege, in which the Duel, and the Action of *Bruce* after it are of a strain above *Comedy*. Those niceties of Honour, and extravagancies of Jealousie and Despair are unnatural on the *Comick Stage*; and the Rescue from the *Ruffians*, for which *Bruce* in the same Scene is oblig'd to his Rival, however brave and generous an action it may appear, consider'd simply in it self, is a trespass against Justice and Propriety of Manners in that place. Indeed that whole Walk of the Play, and the set of Characters peculiarly belonging to it, are more nearly related to the *Buskin*, than the *Sock*, and render the Play one of those which we improperly call *Tragicomedies*. The other Walk, as 'tis one of the most diverting, so 'tis one of the most natural, and best contriv'd that ever came upon the *Stage*.

This

This may suffice to shew that a *Comick* Poet can't trespass against the Laws of Morality in this nature, without offending against the Laws of his own Art; and consequently that such a fault ought rather to be lookt upon as an Error of his Judgment than of his Will, which may deserve the correction of a *Critick*, but not of a *Moralist*.

But supposing that a Writer of *Comedy* shou'd (as many of 'em have done) either thro want of Skill or Caution in the conduct and management of his Plot, so embroil his Gentleman as to reduce him to the hard choice either of accepting or refusing a challenge, the question is, whether the Poet ought to allow him to accept, or answer it, like (what the World calls) a Man of Honour, or to introduce him and his Friend playing the Casuists like *Philotimus* and *Philaethes*, and argue him out of his resentments. In this case the Poets business is to draw his Picture, not to inform his Conscience; which wou'd be as ridiculous in him, as for Sir *Godfrey Kneller* to set up for taking Confessions, and enquire into the Principles of any man, in order to take a

*Comic's Poet oblig'd to draw according to nature.*

*Collier's Moral Essay about Duelling.*

true draught of his Face. The Poet, as well as the Painter is to follow, not to pretend to lead Nature : and if custom and common practice have already determin'd the Point, whether, according to Equity, or not, the Poet exceeds his Commission, if he presumes to run counter to 'em. So that if a Comick Poet be so far overseen, as to bring his Gentlemen into the Field, or but so far towards it as a Challenge, there is no taking up the matter without action, or (which is all one to Mr Collier's objection) shewing a readiness, and disposition for it on both sides. And the Poet stands in need of all his Skill, and Address to save their Honour, and reconcile 'em without engagement.

No breach  
of Morality  
without of-  
fending a-  
gainst the  
Laws of  
the Stage.

Since therefore both by the nature of his subject, and the rules of his art, a Dramatick Poet is limited, and oblig'd, he can't reasonably be charg'd with any thing; as a trespass against Morality, in which he does not offend likewise against them. For Dramatick Poetry, like a Glass, ought neither to flatter, nor to abuse in the Image which it reflects, but to give them their true colour and proportion, and is only valuable

able for being exact. If therefore any man dislikes the Figures, which he sees in it, he finds fault with Nature, not the Poet, if those Pictures be drawn according to the life; and he might as justly snarl at the wise Providence which governs the world, because he meets more ugly Faces than handsome ones, more Knaves and Fools than Honest and Wise men in it, and those too, generally more prosperous and fortunate.

But because some of those Gentlemen, that have taken pains to proclaim War against the present Stage, and have publish'd their censures of it, seem to have no true Idea of the business of a *Dramatick* Poet, and have arraign'd some of the present Writers for the Stage, either through malice or misunderstanding, of high crimes and misdemeanours, in many particulars for doing those things which the duty of a Poet oblig'd 'em to; it may not be amiss, for the information of Mr *Collier* more especially, and those whom his furious misgrounded invectives may have mis-led, to enquire into the nature and Laws of *Stage* Poetry, and the Practice of it, both among the Antients



and Moderns, as far as concerns Morality, and the depending Controversie only, and no farther.

P. 1.  
Mr Collier  
in his end  
of Stage  
Poetry.

And here we may joyn issue with Mr Collier, and allow, that *The business of Plays is to recommend Virtue, and discountenance Vice ; To shew the Uncertainty of Humane Greatness, the sudden turns of Fate, and the unhappy Conclusions of Violence and Injustice. 'Tis to expose the Singularities of Pride and Fancy, to make Folly and Falshood contemptible, and to bring every thing that is Ill under Infamy and Neglect.*

Misaken in  
his method  
of prosecu-  
ting that  
end.

Thus we set out together, and are agreed upon the end of our Journey, but we differ about the road to it. Here therefore we part, and whether we shall meet again is the question. Mr Collier, by the tenour of his discourse thro the whole Book, seems to think, that there is no other way of encouraging Virtue, and suppressing Vice, open to the Poets, but declaiming for or against 'em, and wou'd therefore have *Plays* to be nothing but meer *Moral Dialogues*, wherein five or six persons shou'd meet, and with abundance of Zeal and Rhetorick preach up Virtue, and decry Vice. Here-  
upon

upon he falls upon the Poets with all the Rage and Fury imaginable, for introducing in their Plays vicious Characters, such as in *Tragedy*, *Tyrants*, *Treacherous Statesmen*, *Crafty Priests*, *Rebellious Subjects*, &c. In *Comedy*, *Libertines*, *Whores*, *Sharpers*, *Cullies*, *Fops*, *Pimps*, *Parasites*, and the like.

Now, whether this conduct of the Poets, or his Censure of it be more justifiable, is the subject of our Enquiry. To facilitate which, it will be proper to establish some certain Standard, by which we may measure the Morality or Immorality of a Dramatick Poem, and try thereby some of the most celebrated Pieces, as well of the Antients as Moderns; that their Beauties and Deformities of this kind, either absolute or respective, may appear either severally, or upon collation, and the Poet be accordingly justified or condemn'd.

The Parts therefore of a Play, in which the Morals of the Play appear, are the *Fable*, the *Characters*, and the *Discourse*. Of these the *Fable* (in *Tragedy* especially) is the most considerable, being (according to *Aristotle*) the *Primum Mobile* by which all the other parts

*Morals of*

*a Play*

*wherein*

*shown.*

*Poet. c. 6.*

*Ἀρχὴ μὲν*

*ἐστὶν ἡ οἰον*

*ψυχὴ ὁ*

*μῦθος τ*

*περὶ ὧν*

*ἀσ.*

parts are acted and govern'd, and the principal Instrument by which the Passions are weeded and purg'd, by laying before the Eyes of the Spectators examples of the miserable Catastrophe of Tyranny, Usurpation, Pride, Cruelty, and Ambition, &c. and to crown suffering Virtue with Success and Reward, or to punish the unjust Oppressors of it with Ruine and Destruction.

*Folly and  
Knavery,  
the Sub-  
jects of Co-  
medy.*

In *Comedy*, as it acts in a lower Sphere, so the Persons are less considerable. *Knaves, Misers, Sots, Coquets, Fops, Filths and Cullies*, all which *Comedy* corrects by rendring 'em unsuccessful, and submitting them in her Fable, to the Practices and Stratagems of others, after such a manner, as to expose both Knavery, Vanity, and Affectation, in the conclusion, or winding up, to the Scorn and Derision of the Spectators. And thus by making Folly and Knavery ridiculous to the View, *Comedy* gains her end, stops the contagion, and prevents the imitation more effectually than even Philosophy herself, who deals only in Precept can do, as *Horace*, and before him *Aristotle* have observ'd, by presenting that lively to the Sight,  
which

which the other can only inculcate in words.

*Segnius irritant animos demissa per aures, De Art.  
Quam quæ sunt oculis subjecta fidelibus. Poet.*

Thus while in the large Forest of Humane Affections, *Tragedy* labours to fell those sturdy overgrown Plants the Passions, *Comedy* employs itself in grubbing up the underwood of Vice, Folly and Affectation; and if its Operations are of less importance than those of the former, they make ample amends by their more extended, and almost universal Influence.

But this it seems is not the design of Præf. Pag the Modern Stage Poets; *Virtue* and *Regularity* are their Great Enemies; and to promote *Lewdness* and *Atheism*, and to destroy Principles is their business, if we may believe Mr Collier, who has taken abundance of malicious Pains to incense the World against 'em; and like an experienc'd Incendiary, not only gives the Fire, and blows the Coals, but furnishes Fuel of his own too, to encrease the Flame.



Mr Col-  
lier's Cha-  
racter of  
the Ancient  
Poets invidi-  
ous.

To inflame the Reckoning of the Modern Poets, especially the *English*, by the comparison, he enlarges very much upon the great Modesty and Regard which the *Antients* had to Vertue, and *Decorum*, fallly insinuating thereby as great Neglect and Violation of 'em among the *Moderns*. What he has said in Commendation of the Antients, simply and abstractedly taken, without any Application of comparison, or relation to those that have exercis'd themselves the same way in this Age, and in our Country, may be allow'd as their due; And Mr Collier's deference to the just merits of those great Genius's of Antiquity wou'd turn to his own Praise, if it were paid only as a debt to Justice. But proceeding from a disingenuous design, invidiously to depreciate the worth, and blacken the reputation of others, the Justice is sunk in the Malice of it, and the venom couch'd under it gives an ill Complexion to the fairest Part of his Productions. That this was the motive that induc'd Mr Collier to speak honourably of the *Strage Poets*, is apparent from his perpetual grumbling, and snarling at 'em, even in the midst of his most favourable

ble account of 'em. For tho upon many occasions he declares very largely in their favour, yet 'tis only to balance and sway the competition betwixt them and the Moderns on their side, and by raising the value of their Characters, to depress the others in the esteem of the World. This partiality will plainly appear upon the examination of some of those Pieces of Antiquity, which Mr *Collier* so justly commends, with some of those of later production, which he so unjustly decries.

Mr *Collier* is not content to charge the *English* Poets with Faults of Negligence, or even of licentious wantonness; but he treats 'em with the utmost despight, and brands 'em with the Infamy of a profess'd Hatred to Virtue, a studied Lewdness, and of subverting the end and use of their Art. If this were really their Aim, unquestionably the Fable, which is the Principal Part, and of greatest Influence and Operation, is contriv'd and modell'd so as to be serviceable to their grand design. That this may more certainly appear, we shall take the Pains to analyze some of those Plays, at which Mr *Collier* takes greatest offence,

offence, together with some of the most celebrated of Antiquity.

The *Oedipus Tyrannus* of *Sophocles* has by the universal consent of the learned of all Ages, the greatest reputation of the *Dramatick* Performances of Antiquity, I shall therefore begin with that, and shew that the Fable of that deservedly admir'd Piece is by no means so noble, instructive, and serviceable to Virtue, by its main or general Moral, as many of those Plays, against which and their Authors Mr *Collier* inveighs with so much Bitterness.

Fable of the  
Oedipus  
of Sopho-  
cles.

The Fable of the *Oedipus* is this; *Laius*, the Father of *Oedipus*, and King of *Thebes*, was inform'd by an Oracle, that it was his fate to be slain by his own Son, who should be born of his Wife *Jocasta*. To elude the threats of the Oracle, *Laius*, as soon as the Child was born, delivers him to one of his Servants to be murder'd. This man, mov'd to compassion by the innocence of the Babe, instead of taking away his life, perforating both his Feet, and passing a Bend thro' em, hang'd him up by the Heels, and left him to the disposal of Providence. In this posture he was found

found by a Domestick of *Polybus* King of *Corinth*, who, taking him down, carried him to his Master, who being childless, receiv'd, educated, and own'd him as his own. *Oedipus* being at length grown up, and being in a contest of words with a *Corinthian*, he reproach'd with his unknown Birth, and being a Foundling, of which till that moment he had by the express order of *Polybus*, been kept in ignorance, resolves to consult the Oracle at *Delphi* about his Parentage, and is order'd by the Oracle to seek no further, for that it was his destiny to kill his Father, and beget Children upon his Mother. Upon this answer, he resolves for ever to abandon *Corinth*, his suppos'd Country, and in order thereto, takes his way towards *Thebes*, and on the Road meets *Laius*, and a quarrel arising between 'em, he kills him, and all his followers, one excepted, to whom upon his supplication he gives quarter. Arriving at *Thebes*, he finds that City in great confusion, both for the loss of their King, whom he knew not to be the person slain by him upon the Road, and for the prodigious ravage and waste committed by the Monster *Sphinx*, who di-



distress'd 'em so, that they durst scarce stir out of their Walls. To rid themselves of the terrour of this Monster, the *Thebans* offer their Queen and Crown to any man that could resolve the Riddle propounded by the *Sphinx*, upon the resolution of which only they were to be quit of her. This *Oedipus*, notwithstanding the miscarriage of divers before him, who failing in their attempt were destroy'd by her, undertakes, and succeeding in it, the Monster breaks her own Neck, and he in reward, receives the Crown, and Queen to Wife. For some time *Oedipus* governs with great prudence, and has several Children by *Jocasta*. At length a furious Plague arising, and making great Havock in the City, *Oedipus* deposes *Creon* to the Oracle, to consult about the Causes of, and Means to be deliver'd from the Pestilence.

Thus far the History of *Oedipus* proceeds before the Action of the Play commences ; and tho the whole action of the Play naturally arises from this antecedent part, yet *Sophocles* has very artificially reserv'd it to be deliver'd by way of Narration at the unravelling of the

the Plot, which is the most natural and beautiful of all Antiquity. But what is only considerable to our purpose is, that hitherto *Oedipus* bears the character of a Just and a Wise man; and if he be involv'd in any thing that bears an appearance of Guilt, invincible Ignorance (which the Schoolmen hold to be a good Plea) is his excuse.

But if he is hitherto innocent of any intentional Guilt, he is thro the whole course of the Action exemplarily pious. At his first appearance upon the Stage, he shows an extraordinary concern for the calamities of his Country, and an anxious solicitude for a Remedy. *Jupiter's Priest* addresses to him, as if he were their tutelær Deity, and tells him, that 'twas this miserable experiment of his being unable to relieve 'em, that had convinc'd him, and those with him, *that he was not equal to the Gods, and had made 'em have recourse to their Altars.*

Pity of  
*Oedipus.*

Θεῶν μὴ γὰρ ἐκ τῶνδε πόλεως ἐστὶν ἰσχυρὸς ἄνθρωπος,  
ὃς οὐδὲ ταῦτά, καὶ τὰς πόλιν ἐπὶ τῶνδε.

Sophocl.  
*Oedip.*  
Tyrann.

This was a bold complement from a Priest, and the Priest of *Jupiter* too, the

K

So-

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*Piety of  
Oedipus.*

Θεοὶς μὴ γὰρ ἐκ ἰσχυρῶν σ' ἵστα,  
ἐδ' οἷός τ' αὖτις, ἔχμεν ἐφείστοι.

Sophocl.  
Oedip.  
Tyrann.

This was a bold complement from a Priest, and the Priest of *Jupiter* too, the

K

So



Oedipus'  
Proclama-  
tion.

Sovereign of the Gods. But not to insist too much upon this Passage, *Creon* enters, and breaks off the Parley betwixt 'em ; He brings word from the Oracle, that the Murtherer, of *Laius* must be expell'd the Territories of *Thebes*. Who was this Murtherer was yet a Secret, the Oracle not making that discovery. *Oedipus* hereupon summons a meeting of the People, and makes Proclamation, that if any one privy to the Fact would come in, and make a discovery, he shou'd, if concern'd therein, be indemnified in his Person, and be oblig'd only to leave *Thebes*. But that if he cou'd inform of any other Person therein concern'd, he shou'd be liberally rewarded, and purchase his Favour by such Discovery. And if any one, conscious of this matter, did out of fear for himself or his Friend, obstinately refuse to break silence, he requir'd all his Subjects not to give him harbour or sustenance, or to hold any manner of Commerce or Correspondence with him. After this he proceeds to imprecate the Actor or Actors of this Regicide, and extends the curse to his own House, if with his privy he was protected there.

But

But this method failing to produce the desir'd effect, he consults *Tiresias* the Prophet, by whom *Oedipus* himself is accus'd of killing his Father, and committing Incest with his Mother ; which Accusation being afterwards confirm'd by the concurring report of the old Servant of *Laius*, by whom he was expos'd in his Infancy, and of the Domestick of *Polybus*, despairing in the horror of these involuntary crimes, he tears out his own Eyes ; and *Jocasta*, who equally ignorant was involv'd in the guilt of Incest, hangs herself.

This Plot, however noble and beautiful to admiration, for the Structure and Contrivance of it, is yet very deficient in the Moral, which has nothing great or serviceable to Virtue in it. It may indeed serve to put us in mind of the Lubricity of Fortune, and the Instability of human Greatness. And this use *Sophocles* himself makes of it ; for the *Chorus* closes the Tragedy with this remark, by way of advice to the Audience, *that they should not rashly measure any man's Felicity by his present Fortune, but wait his extremest Moments, to make a true estimate of his Happiness.*

Χο. Ω πάτερ, Ζήβη, ἔνοικε, λείπεται, Οἰδίπου, ἴδε,  
 "Ος τὰ κλεῖν' ἀνιγμάτων ἦδη, καὶ κρείττος τοῦ ἀνδρὸς,  
 "Ος τις ἐξ ἡλκω πολιτῶν καὶ τύχαις ἐπιβλήπων,  
 Εἰς ὅσον κλύδωνα Διωνῆς συμφορᾶς ἐκλάυθεν;  
 "Ὅν Διὸς ὄντ' ἐκείσθην ἢ τελευταίαν ἰδὼν  
 Ἥμετερον ἐπισκοπῶντα, μηδὲν ἐλπίζων, πρὶν εἰ  
 Τέρμα τοῦ βίου περᾶσθαι, μηδὲν ἀλγυνὸν παθεῖν.

*Moral of the  
 English  
 Oedipus  
 the same.*

Mr Dryden, who has borrow'd this Story from *Sophocles*, has summ'd up his Moral in the two concluding lines of his Play, in which not only the application seems to be the same, but the Lines themselves are a contracted Paraphrase of *Sophocles* own conclusion.

*Let none, tho ne're so virtuous, great,  
 and high,  
 Be judg'd entirely blest before they  
 dye.*

*Merely spe-  
 culative.*

This Moral, as it carries nothing in it but a lazy, unactive speculation, can be no great Incentive to Virtue; so on the other hand, as it lays before us the Miseries and Calamitous Exit of a person of so Heroick Virtue, it seems to carry matter of discouragement along with

with it ; since the most consummate Virtue meets with so disproportionate a return.

But with Reverence to the Ashes of *Sophocles*, and submission to the better Judgment of Mr *Dryden*, this does not seem to be the true and genuine Moral of this Fable. For according to this Moral, the misfortune of *Oedipus* ought to have been the result of a kind of negligent Oscitation in the Gods, and a loose administration of Providence. Whereas on the contrary it appears, that all the Actions of *Oedipus*, as well those that were Pious, Wise, and Brave, as those that were Criminal, or rather Unfortunate, were the necessary and unavoidable Consequences of a fixt decree of Fate, backt by several Oracles, carried on, and brought about by variety of Miraculous or Providential Incidents. This *Tiresias* seems to hint plainly to *Oedipus*, when he tells him.

Αὐτὴ γὰρ μῆτις ἢ τύχη διαλέσεν.

Fortune herself, ( or Fate ) destroys thee;



And *Oedipus* himself, finding by the relation of *Jocasta*, that the circumstances of the death of *Laius*, agreed with those of the persons slain by him on the Road, and beginning to be convinc'd of his own guilt, ushers in his account of that action, with the fatal necessity that oblig'd him to leave his own Country; and relates his Piety, as 'twere by way of alleviation for what follows. He pleads, that being inform'd by the Oracle, that he should kill his Father, and commit Incest with his Mother, he had quitted the expectation of a Crown, and made himself a voluntary, and perpetual Exile from *Corinth*, to avoid the Crimes he was threatned with.

Καὶ γὰρ παύσας ταῦτα, ἦ κοινδία  
 Ἄστροις τὸ λοιπὸν ἐκμετρήμενος χθόνα,  
 Ἐφευγον ἔνθα μή ποτ' ὀφείμην κακῶν  
 Χρησμῶν δεῖδειν τῶν ἐμῶν τελευτῶν.

The *English Oedipus* is more plain, and expresses himself more clearly in defence of his Innocence, ev'n while he suspects himself to have been an Actor in the Tragedy of *Laius*.

*To you good Gods, I make my last ap- Oed p. 39.  
 peal,  
 Or clear my Virtues, or my Crime re-  
 veal :  
 If wandring in the Maze of Fate I  
 run,  
 And backward trod the paths I thought  
 to shun,  
 Impute my Errours to your own de-  
 cree ;  
 My Hands are guilty, but my Heart is  
 free.*

Here Oedipus seems to suspect the  
 truth of the matter, and alledges his  
 own Ignorance, and the decree of the  
 Gods in his Justification ; but the Ghost  
 of *Lains* clears the point of Fatality,  
 and makes a better Apology for Oedi-  
 pus, than 'twas possible for him to do  
 for himself.

*But he who holds my Crown, Oh must Oed p. 33.  
 I speak ?  
 Was doom'd to do what Nature most  
 abhors ;  
 The Gods foresaw it, and forbade his  
 being,*

Before he yet was born. I broke their  
Laws.

And cloath'd with flesh, the pre-existing  
Soul.

Some kinder Power , too weak for  
destiny,

Took pity, and indu'd his new form'd  
Mass

With Temperance, Justice, Prudence,  
Fortitude,

And every kingly Virtue ; but in  
vain.

For Fate, that sent him hoodwink'd to  
the world,

Perform'd its work by his mistaken  
hands.

These instances consider'd, together  
with the Order, Contrivance and Na-  
ture of the Fable, as well of the Greek,  
as the *Englist* Poem, will readily point  
out to us a greater Moral, and more na-  
turally arising from the subject, than  
that which the two Poets have assign'd.  
For it seems plainly to hold forth to us,  
the irresistible Power of Fate, and the Va-  
nity of human Wisdom, when oppos'd to  
the immutable decrees of Providence, which  
converts to its own purposes, all our en-  
deavours

*deavours to defeat 'em, and makes our very Opposition subservient to its own designs.*

*Seneca*, who has taken this Fable from *Sophocles*, with very little alteration, has however given this turn to the Application, in conformity to the Doctrine of the *Stoicks*, who were the Predestinarians of Antiquity, and held as Ours do, a Fatality, that directed and controul'd all human Actions, that all things came to pass by pre-ordination and invincible necessity, and that there was no such thing as a free Agent in the World.

Some Learned Men are of opinion, that this Tragedy was written by *Seneca* the *Philosopher*, and this change of the *Sophoclean* Moral, in favour of his Principles, seems to be no despicable Argument on their side. But whether they be in the right or wrong, I can't but wonder that Mr *Dryden* should overlook this alteration, or rather amendment to *Sophocles's* Moral, it being the principal part of the Play, and the mark at which all is levell'd. But perhaps Mr *Dryden* being justly prepossessed for the performance of *Sophocles* in preference to *Seneca's*, his aim was not so much

*Moral of Seneca*

*Seneca the Philosopher supposed the Author.*

*His Morals neglected by the Author of the English Oedipus.*



much to enquire after any improvements, as additions to *Sophocles's* design, and by that means let slip this, which was not to his purpose, which was to fit it up to the *English* Stage; for the use of which it needed not correction, so much as enlargement; the simplicity of the Original Fable and the Chasms, which the omission of the *Chorus* must necessarily make, requiring to be fill'd up, and supply'd with an *Underplot* and proper *Episodes*. And indeed he seems to confess as much, when he says, that

*Preface to Oedip.* *Seneca supply'd 'em with no new hint but only a relation, which he makes of his Tyresias raising the Ghost of Laius.*

But having declar'd for the *Moral* of *Seneca*, as more natural than that of *Sophocles*, considering the disproportion both of Reputation and Merit of these two Authors in the *Dramatick* way, I must expect the censure of those Criticks, that judge by wholesale, or hear-say, that will admit of no error in any Author, that themselves, or those, in whom they have an implicit Faith, admire; nor allow any Graces to him, that has not the good fortune to be their Favourite. I shall therefore produce *Seneca's*

ca's application at large in his own words, as I have already done *Sophocles's*, and then back my opinion with an Observation or two, drawn from the state of the Fable, as it lies in these Authors, and leave 'em to the courtesie of the Reader.

The last Song of the *Chorus* in *Seneca*, which is what the Poet delivers by way of Instruction, or Application to the Audience, runs thus.

Cho. *Fatis agimur : cedit fatis.*

*Non sollicitæ possunt curæ*

*Mutare rati stammina fusi.*

*Quicquid patimur mortale genus,*

*Quicquid facimus, venit ex alto :*

*Servatq; sua decreta colus*

*Lachesis, dura revoluta manu.*

*Omnia certo tramite vadunt ;*

*Primusq; dies dedit extremum,*

*Non illa deo vertisse licet,*

*Quæ nexa suis currunt causis.*

*It cuiq; ratus, prece non ulla*

*Mobilis, ordo. Multis ipsum*

*Timuisse nocet. Multi ad fatum*

*Venere suum, dum fata timent.*

Senec.  
Oedip. p.  
107.

The

Summ of  
Seneca's  
Moral.

The summ of this is; *That there is (according to the Doctrine of the Stoicks) an over-ruling Providence, or Fate, that disposes and governs all things; That the Sources of mens Fortunes, and the Springs of their Actions are plac'd out of their reach, inaccessible to human Prudence, and inflexible to Entreaties; that they move in a constant course, inviolable even to the Gods themselves; that causes and their effects are inseparably linkt, the first day (of Life) determining the last; that the Caution of many has been destructive to 'em, and that in shunning their Fate, they have run upon it.*

That this is, the most natural Application, the very contrivance of the Fable in all these three Plays, will sufficiently make out. *Seneca*, and the *English Authors* have, in imitation of *Sophocles*, made the *Parricide* and *Incest* of *Oedipus* the proper Act, and Deed of *Fate*, of which he was only the unhappy and unwilling Instrument. Both his Father and himself had been forewarn'd, and had us'd their utmost endeavours to evade the calamities that threatned 'em. But those very efforts, however seemingly prudent, became the Snare in  
which

which they were taken, and the means of verifying the Prediction of the Oracle. For the exposing *Oedipus* in his Infancy, was the occasion of his Ignorance of his true Parents, and that Ignorance of all his ensuing miseries. All these Authors give us a high Idea of his Virtue and Prudence; and *Seneca* as well as the aforecited Authors, makes him sacrifice his Expectations of a Crown, and become a voluntary Exile out of an Abhorrence of those Crimes, which were predicted of him.

*Hic me Paternis expulit regnis Timor.*

This fear has banish'd me my Fathers  
Realm.

And when he had been accus'd of *Oedipus's* the murder of *Laius*, upon the Infor-<sup>Justificati-</sup>mation of the Gods, he appeals to his<sup>on of him-</sup>self. own Conscience for his Innocence.

*Obiisse nostro Laium scelere autu-*  
*mant*

*Superi Inferiq; sed animus contra inno-*  
*cens.*

*Sibiq; melius quam Deis notus, negat.*

The



The Gods accuse me ; but my guiltless  
mind

The better Judge acquits me.

And in the next Scene upon the news  
of Polybus's death, he cries out,

*Genitor sine ulla cæde defunctus ja-  
cet,*

*Testor , licet jam tollere ad celum  
pie*

*Puras nec ulla scelere metuentes ma-  
nus.*

Extinct my Father by a Bloudless  
death !

Now I may stretch to Heaven my  
guiltless hands

Fearless of any stain.

Harmony  
of the  
Greek,  
Roman,  
and En-  
glish Au-  
thors.

Thus they all agree to make him just  
and virtuous in his Intentions to an He-  
roick Pitch, yet they involve him in a  
Fatal Necessity even before his Birth, of  
acting those things, to which in his  
Nature he had the greatest abhorrence,  
and make his Piety and Aversion to  
Wickedness, the very means to entrap  
and entangle him in that Guilt, which  
he so industriously fled from, and which  
occa-

occasioned the Calamities, that afterwards befel both himself and Family.

The structure and disposition of this Fable, afford no occasion of complaint, or reflection upon the Levity of Fortune, or the Instability of Human Affairs. For nothing is more evident, than the steady and regular administration of Providence thro the whole course of the misfortunes of *Oedipus*, and his Family. Nothing befel them, which was not predicted long before hand, and of which they had not a terrible apprehension, as well as a certain Expectation. And when they bent their endeavours to defeat the decrees of Fate, such a manifest Series of Providential Incidents attends their management, as suffices not only to baffle their Cunning and Devices, but likewise to shew the Uncontrolableness and Superiority of that Power, which influenced their Counsels, and serv'd itself of their Presumption, as the immediate Instrument to accomplish, and effect its Purposes, and at the same time to demonstrate the Vanity of Humane opposition to the Will of Destiny.

*Levity of Fortune not the occasion of the Fall of Oedipus.*

*Opposition of Providence.*

Had

*Presump-  
tion of Laius.*

Had *Laius* submitted himself to the Pleasure of Providence, and not presum'd to have thwarted the Divine Appointment, and triumphed over his Destiny, his Son had not been ignorant of his true Parentage ; and being a person of Inclinations so extraordinary Virtuous, 'tis morally impossible he should willingly have incurr'd the guilt of two Crimes of so monstrous a Size as *Parricide* and *Incest*. Or had *Oedipus* submissively resigned himself to the Conduct and Direction of Fate ; whatever his Regret and Abhorrence of his predicted Fortune had been, he had return'd to *Corinth*, and his Patience, and Resignation had avoided that Misery, which his mistaken Piety and Opposition brought afterwards upon his head.

*Another  
Moral.*

This consideration may supply us with another Moral to this Fable, different from any ( that I know of ) hitherto rais'd upon it by any Poet, either Antient or Modern. It may instruct us, that the Will of Heaven is not to be disputed by Mortals, how severe soever, even to Injustice, the Conditions of it may seem to us ; and that whoever sets up his own Wisdom in opposition to it, shall in that Presumption

*Presumption meet both his Crime and his Punishment.*

Nothing, if we consider it simply in itself, could be more heroically pious than the resolution of *Oedipus* to abandon a Crown, his Parents and Country, rather than suffer those Pollutions with which he was threatned. But if we consider the Impiety of advancing his own Judgment in his conceit above that of his Gods, and thinking by his own Wisdom, to reverse the immutable decrees of destiny, his Vanity deserv'd the heaviest chastisement. The same may be said of his Father. It may be objected, that this irresistible Predestination was not so universally receiv'd an Opinion among the Antient Heathens, but that many held the contrary; and that consequently 'tis but supposing *Oedipus* one of the number, and my Moral falls to the ground. I grant it does so, if he were, but the contrary appears from the Story itself. For if *Oedipus* did not believe such a Fátality, why did he upon the credit of an Oracle, which must signifie no more to him than one of *Partridge*, or *Gadbury's* Astrological Banter, leave his Friends, and his

*Presumption of Oedipus.*

*Oedipus in Sophocles, and the rest of the Tragedians a Predestinarian.*

I great



great Expectations? But this supposes him a rank Fool, to abdicate for a *talk of a Tub*, a Story that he did not believe. If he did believe, he ought not to escape the Censure and Punishment of a rash presumptuous man, for suffering his Vanity to triumph over his Faith, and daring upon an insolent opinion of his own Ability to insult his Religion, and hope to prevail against, and defeat the purpose of Fate.

French  
Moral.

Some French Criticks, that seem sensible of the defect of the Moral in *Sophocles*, have endeavoured to supply that want, by starting an imaginary Guilt, and impute as a Crime to *Oedipus*, his curiosity to know his Fate. I call it an imaginary Guilt, because I think it is urg'd against him without Foundation. For certainly it could never be a Sin in him, when his Parentage was become doubtful to him, to have recourse to such means, as his Religion allow'd, to clear up his doubts, and take off the Reproach that was thrown upon him. Divination was so far from being a Criminal Art among the Ancient Heathens, that it was practic'd with great Reputation in all its

Necromancy  
and all  
sorts of Divination  
allowed by  
the Religion of the  
Heathens.

its several kinds, and the Professors of any part of it, were esteemed as Prophets, and held in great veneration. It could not therefore be scandalous to consult 'em upon any occasion, much less the Oracle of *Apollo*; to repair to which, was thought an act of high Devotion, and was the constant Practice of all the Cities and States of *Greece*, upon all great and sudden Emergencies. But their mistake lies in raising a *Christian* Moral upon a *Pagan* bottom; to fill up, they have grafted a Doctrine many ages younger upon the old Stock, and piec'd out a defect with an Absurdity.

I am apt to think upon consideration, that the Authors of the *English Oedipus*, in adhering to the simple old *Greek* Moral, acted rather by Judgment and Choice, than Oversight. For the *Moral* of *Seneca*, tho more naturally deducible from the Story, is yet less serviceable, or (to speak more properly) more destructive to Practical Morality, as preaching up the Doctrine of absolute and universal Predestination, by which men are denied the liberty of so much as a thought, as free Agents, and are suppos'd to be acted, and workt like Machines by an

*Conjecture*  
at the Rea-  
sons that  
induced  
the Authors  
of the *En-*  
*glish Oe-*  
*dipus* to  
prefer the  
*Greek Mo-*  
*ral* to the  
*Latine*.

invisible, irresistible Agent, which winds 'em up like Watches, and orders their several Movements. This Doctrine, as it destroys all title to Merit from the best, so it takes off all fear of Guilt from the most villanous actions, and must necessarily (if heartily believ'd) discourage men from the severer and more troublesome Duties of Religion, and Morality at least, and dispose them to resign themselves loosely up to the government of their Appetites, and indulge their sensual Inclinations; to gratify which could be no sin, to oppose 'em no Virtue, and deserve neither blame nor thanks, according to this Principle.

Seneca's  
Moral  
proper for  
the English  
stage.

Besides the unserviceableness of this Moral to the general end of *Dramatick* Poetry, it was upon that Score disabled for the particular service of the *English* Stage, where it could not hope for a favourable Reception; and might therefore be by these Authors judiciously rejected. For tho' this Musty Rag of Heathen *Stoicism* be still worn by a Party amongst us, that affect to distinguish themselves by Opposition, and Contradiction, tho' to their own Principles,

ciples, and that pretend to act contrary to the natural result of their Opinion, and profess a severer Morality than their Neighbours ; yet by the more Polite and Civilized Part of the Nation, who are the chief Frequenters, and Support of the *Dramatick* Performances, it has been long left off, as a Principle destructive to Humanity, Virtue, and all good Manners ; and consequently would have been exploded upon the Stage, and hazarded the success of the whole Piece.

But whether this Moral were neglected by 'em out of design or oversight, is not much to our purpose. 'Tis evident, that neither the *Greek* nor *Latin* Moral, have any tendency to the promotion of Virtue, and the Reformation of Manners, but rather to the contrary. So that if Mr *Collier* has any thing of this Nature to object against any of the present Stage Poets, they may defend, or at least excuse such a slip by this Precedent, which being the Master-piece not only of *Sophocles*, but of all Antiquity ; for that reason, I hope Mr *Collier* (who has already declar'd, that this Author has *nothing but what is great and solemn throughout*) will not charge

*Greek and Roman*

*Moral unserviceable to virtue.*

P. 28



him with any ill design, or acting upon Malice prepenſe againſt Virtue. But if he ſhould, he has already taken his Tryal before *Aristotle*, a more competent and more upright Judge, and ſtands acquitted on Record, and muſt be allow'd to be *rectus in Curia*.

*Oedipus,*  
was ſo mi-  
nutely exa-  
mined.

I have been the more particular in examining the general Moral of this Play, and have conſider'd not only what has been made of it, but what might have been drawn from it, that I might for the remainder be excus'd from the trouble of deſcending to minute circumſtances, and for the future be allow'd to ſumm up what I have to ſay to any other Plays of Antiquity upon this general head of the Fable, and ſo proceed to our Poets, with whom alſo I ſhall be as brief as the matter will allow me.

The reſt of *Sophocles's* Plays, being much leſs conſiderable for their Succeſs in the World, I ſhall diſpatch the conſideration of 'em in as few words as poſſible. His *Ajax Flagellifer* ſtands firſt in order, and affords us no great matter to reflect upon.

*Fable of*  
*of Ajax*  
*Flagelli-*  
*fer.*

*Ajax*, diſappointed and diſgrac'd in his ſuit for the Arms of *Achilles*, reſents ex-  
treamly

treably the Injury and Indignity, and resolves to be reveng'd upon the whole *Grecian* Army. In order thereto he makes a Sally from his Quarter by night, in order to kill all the Principal Officers. *Minerva*, to divert the mischief intended, infatuates him, and turns him loose upon some herds of Cattle, amongst whom, mistaking 'em for *Greeks*, he makes most terrible havoc; and returning to his Tent and Sences in the morning, he perceives his Errour, thro the confusion, shame, and vexation of which, he grows desperate, falls upon his Sword, and dies. This is the whole of the *Fable*. For the contest that follows between *Tencher*, *Mcnelaus*, and *Agamemnon*, is an Episode detach'd from, and has nothing to do with, and scarce any dependance upon the main Action.

Here we see a man of Impetuous, Ungovernable Passion, and of a Nice, Capricious Honour, that conceives himself injur'd in the most sensible part, his honour, and meditates a Revenge proportioned to the Fierceness of his Temper, and the imagin'd Greatness of the Affront. *Minerva* interposes, and turns

his Rage, and Fury, first to his further disgrace, and then to his destruction.

*Moral some-  
times ob-  
scure.*

The *Moral* of this Play is not very obvious, and *Sophocles* himself does not hint it at or near the conclusion of the Play, but leaves it to be pickt out by the Audience, or Readers ; which may be done two ways. First, By considering the Quality of the Instrument or Engine of *Ajax's* Ruine, which was a *Goddeſs* ; and the manner of bringing it about, which was by making him ridiculous thro a *Deceptio Viſus*, or an Illuſion of the Sight ; and then the *Moral* will be,

Quos Deus vult perdere, prius de-  
mentat.

*When the Gods resolve upon a mans ru-  
in, they take away his Wits.*

Or 2dly, We may conſider the Cha-  
racter of the Perſon, a man of Un-  
daunted Boldneſs, and Turbulent Head-  
ſtrong Paſſions, and the Nature of his  
Attempt, which was to kill all the  
*Grecian* Chiefs ; and then the *Moral*  
may be

— Qui

— Qui non moderabitur Iræ  
Infectum volet esse Dolor quod sua-  
ferit.—

2d Moral.

*He that suffers himself to be precipitated  
into action by his Rage, will have cause to  
 rue the effects of it.*

The first of these is the most genuine,  
and natural. For the misfortune of  
*Ajax* seems not to arise so much from  
a repentance of his Undertaking, as  
from indignation, and a bitter sense of  
the Scorn and Contempt he had drawn  
upon himself by so ridiculous a miscar-  
riage, and the trick put upon him by  
*Minerva*. This is all that naturally a-  
rises from the Action; and the Author,  
who seems sensible of the barrenness  
of his Plot, forages without his lines  
to subsist his Moral. By this means  
he has provided himself of a no-  
ble Moral, which he intimates in the  
close of the first Scene, betwixt *Minerva*  
and *Ulysses*, where the Goddess, after  
having inform'd *Ulysses* how she had  
besotted *Ajax*, advises him to take warn-  
ing, and not to be so far transported upon  
any good Fortune, or presume so far upon his  
own Prowess as to provoke the Gods by in-  
solent

*Moral of  
the Author  
not arising  
naturally  
from the  
Action.*



*solent Language ; who lov'd Modesty, and hated Arrogance.* And about the middle of the Play, a Messenger relates to the *Chorus*, what pass'd between *Chalcas* and *Tencher* about the quarrel, and hatred of *Minerva* to *Ajax*, Which was for presuming upon the sufficiency of his own Strength and Courage, and refusing her Protection and Assistance, which she offer'd him against the *Trojans*. But this is wholly without the Action (which cannot properly suggest any such thing) and is introduc'd by way of Narration, only to justify the proceeding of *Minerva* against *Ajax*, and is no longer insisted on after the death of *Ajax*.

2d Moral  
not very  
natural.

The other Moral, as it does not seem to flow so naturally from the Fable, as the first, so it seems never to have been in *Sophocles's* thoughts. For the last disgrace, and the Desperate Action that follow'd it, are the effect of a supernatural Agent, (*viz.*) *Minerva*, and produc'd by a sudden Infatuation after a supernatural manner; and therefore the Poet cou'd have no just occasion to reflect upon the natural ill consequences of Passion, how outrageous or ungovernable soever. For this reason I shall pursue

pursue the consideration of it no farther.

The next in order is the *Electra*, in Fable of the Electra. which there is scarce the shadow of a Plot, nor much more of a Moral. *Orestes* (who after the murder of his Father *Agamemnon*, had by the care of his Sister *Electra* escap'd the fury of his Mother *Clytemnestra* and her Paramour *Ægisthus*, ) comes to *Argos* with his Tutor, whom he sends to deceive his Mother with a Sham Story of his Death, and in the mean time discovers himself to his Sister, with whom he consults about means to revenge the Death of his Father ; is introduc'd to his Mother as a stranger, kills her, and afterwards *Ægisthus*.

Thro the whole Play the Poet does not so much as squint toward a Moral, he lets nothing fall by which the Audience may so much as guess what he drives at. But by the contrivance of the Fable, wherein a Wife, that had embued her hands in her Husbands blood, after having abus'd his Bed, is, together with her Adulterer and Fellow Murderer, after a succession of some years of prosperous Villany, overtaken by

by Vengeance from the hands of the Son,  
and slain; we may conclude with Ho-  
race,

Moral.

*Raro antecedentem scelestum  
Deseruit pede pœna claudo.*

*That Divine Vengeance seldom fails to o-  
vertake great Villanies.*

This is all the *Moral* that I can find  
in this Play, nor do I perceive that *So-  
phocles* himself took care by any overt  
Expression to intimate it to the Audi-  
ence.

Fable of the  
Antigone.

The *Antigone* is something better con-  
triv'd. *Antigone*, contrary to *Creon's*  
order, buries her Brother *Polynices*. *Cre-  
on* orders her to be shut up in a Cave  
alive, and commands, that no body  
shou'd relieve her. *Hemon* his Son  
pleads for her, and unable to prevail,  
goes to the Cave, and finds that *Anti-  
gone* his Mistress had hang'd herself.  
In the interim *Tyresias* comes to *Creon*,  
and tells him, that he did amiss, and  
that he ought with all expedition to re-  
pair his Fault. *Creon* continues obsti-  
nate, and reviles the Prophet, who re-  
turns the complement, and threatens  
*Creon*

*Creon* with the calamities that shou'd come immediately upon his Family for his Impiety and Obstinacy, and so leaves him. *Creon* after his departure relents, and makes haste to save *Antigone*, but comes too late, and finds his Son raving for the loss of his Mistress, and hardly escapes being killed by him. *Hemon* kills himself, and his Mother upon the News herself.

Here *Sophocles* speaks out for himself, <sup>Moral.</sup> and tell his Audience what Judgment they are to make of these surprizing Events, which had in a moment overturned a flourishing Family. The Chorus in the Conclusion says

Χο. Πολλὸν το φρονεῖν ἰουδαίμονίας  
 Πρῶτον ὑπάρχει. Χρὴ δὲ τὰ γ' εἰς θεοῖς  
 Μηδὲν ἀσεπτεῖν. —

*Wisdom is the first step to Happiness. The Gods must not be irreverently treated. For the great Punishments, that attended the Profane liberties of speech of Insolent Men, were Lessons of Humility at last.*

The *Oedipus Coloneus* is a Play, that <sup>Oedipus Coloneus</sup> we are told was very much admir'd at *Athens*; and it is no great wonder. For it was written on purpose to Flatter, and



and do honour to the *Athenians*, and therefore cou'd scarce fail of a good reception. This Policy of *Sophocles* will furnish us with both a Plot, and a Moral, which 'twill otherwise be hard to find in this Play. The Poet was now in his old age, and had long out-lived Mr *Dryden's Fumbling Age of Poetry*, and perhaps began to be sensible of some decay, and therefore to support the weight of that reputation, which he had acquired in the vigour of his Poetry, he pieces out the Lyons Skin with the Foxes Tail, and suspecting his own power to move their Passions as formerly, makes use of their Vanity to scrue them up to the desired pitch of Admiration and Satisfaction. This, if the Reader pleases, may serve instead of a Plot, and the success of it may afford us this Moral; that *no people is so strongly fortified against Flattery, but that, if their Vanity be skilfully tickled, it will be reus'd, and exert itself in favour of the Flatterer.*

This is, indeed, beside the Action, and in probability was not the Moral, which *Sophocles* intended for the Publick; but 'tis plain, that 'twas the  
secret

secret Motive upon which he acted, and the genuine Moral of his Conduct.

The Fable of *Oedipus Coloneus*, such as it is in this. *Oedipus*, under the Conduct of his Daughter *Antigone*, arrives at a Grove near *Athens* consecrated to the *Furies*, whither he had been directed by the *Oracle* to go. *Creon*, endeavours to fetch him away by force; *Theseus* intervenes, and rescues him. *Oedipus* dies at last in the place appointed by *Fate* and the *Oracle*.

*Fable of  
Oedipus  
Coloneus*

This is a plain story, without either Turn or Consequence, upon which there is no possibility of raising a Moral. *Sophocles* seems to have endeavoured at something like one in the Conclusion. For when the Daughters of *Oedipus* lamented immoderately his death, the *Chorus* tells 'em, *That they ought not to bewail any longer one that was come to his desir'd end.*

*No Moral.*

The *Trachiniae* seems almost as little contriv'd for Edification as the foregoing. *Dejanira* being inform'd that *Hercules* grew amorous of his Captive *Iole*, to retrieve and ensure his Affection to her, sends by *Lichas* an envenom'd Shirt, which she suppos'd to have been

*Trachiniae its Fable.*

dipt

dipt in a Philtre. This unhappy Present being upon his Back, immediately corroded the Flesh in such manner, that in a rage he dash'd out *Lichas* the Bearers Brains. *Dejanira* hearing the Fatal Effects of her Errour, kills herself. *Hercules* having charged his Son *Hyllus* to marry his Concubine *Iole*, burns himself.

Moral of  
Sopho-  
cles.

\* ἀγρο-  
μοσύνην,  
which  
signifies  
Folly or In-  
justice.

The reflection that *Sophocles* makes upon all this, is, that, 'tis all *Jupiter's* doing. *Hyllus*, in the close, boldly accuses the Gods of \* *Injustice*, for deserting their own Off-spring. He adds,

Τὰ δὲ νῦν ἱστῶν, οἱ κτὰ μὲν ἡμῖν,  
ἄλλοις ἐμβροῖσι.

*These things are a heavy Affliction to*

*us,*  
*But a scandal to them.*

The *Chorus* seconds his Complaint, and says, that all their Calamities are of *Jupiter's* sending.

καὶ πάντες τοῦτον ὅτι μὲν Ζεὺς.

This

This Fable and Application afford very little matter of Moral Instruction; and the use that the Poet himself makes of it, is rather a discouragement to Virtue, since neither the Heroick Qualities, nor Actions of *Hercules*, nor the relation to *Jupiter*, could exempt himself or Family from such lamentable disasters.

However, the misfortune of *Dejanira* may serve as a caution against Jealousie and Adultery, which two failings in conjunction, occasion'd her ruin. And *Hercules* himself may be an instance of the dangerous consequences of a licentious ungovern'd Flame, which at last was the destruction of him, who had withstood, and baffled the utmost Malice and Invention of *Juno*.

The Fable of the *Philoctetes* is this. *Philoctetes* having an incurable Ulcer in his Foot, from the bite of a Serpent in his Voyage to *Troy*, was deserted, and left by the *Greeks* alone upon the desert Shore of *Lemnos*. But his Presence being declar'd absolutely necessary to the taking of *Troy*, *Ulysses* and *Pyrrhus* are sent to fetch him. He refuses obstinately to go along with 'em, but *Hercules*

*Philoctetes*  
res, this  
Fable.

M

ap



appearing, and perswading him, he complies.

*No Moral.*

This likewise is a barren Story, of which *Sophocles* himself has made no moral Use, and has scarce given occasion for any one else to do it.

*Philoctetes* had been barbarously expos'd by his Confederates the *Greeks*, for which he was irreconcilably angry with 'em, especially *Ulysses*, who had been the Executioner of their Resolutions in relation to him. He therefore refuses obstinately to go with, or to those that had serv'd him so basely; but *Hercules* appearing, and telling him, that upon those terms, and no other, he must expect his cure, and prosperity, the man had so much Wit in his Anger, as to prefer Health and Fame before fullen Revenge, which must be his own as well as their disappointment.

*Speech of  
Hercules  
not pertinent  
to the  
Action.  
P. 93.*

Mr Collier wou'd pass the Speech of *Hercules* upon us for a Moral. But by his leave, how remarkably Moral soever the Conclusion of this Play may be, the morality of it no way depends upon the Action foregoing. *Hercules* prevails with *Philoctetes* to go with *Ulysses*, and *Pyrrhus* promises him Health, Honour, and

and Riches, and recommends the care of Religion to him.

*ἰουδοῖν τὰ πρὸς θεῷ.*

*Which, says he, Jupiter regards above all things.*

This was indeed good advice, and matter of Instruction to the Audience, as well as *Philoctetes* ; but not arising any way from the main Action, it might as properly have been said at any other time, and upon any other occasion, as this ; and if it must serve for a Moral, might as justly have been the Moral of any other Play.

Thus I have run through *Sophocles*, *Ibid.* *whose Plays* (by Mr Collier's own confession) *are form'd upon Models of Virtue, joyn Innocence with Pleasure, and design the Improvement of the Audience.*

Upon this account, and the great Reputation of this Author, I have been more particular with him upon this head, than I design to be with any of the rest of the Antient Tragedians. I have set before the Reader the several Models of all his remaining Plays, and have enquir'd into the Disposition of

the Fable in relation to the service of *Morality*, that upon collation we may with more certainty measure the comparative *Morality* of his and the Modern Plays on this Article.

Art. Poet.  
Cap. xiii.

*Euripides*, who came nearest him both in Time and Reputation, is yet more defective in this point. *Aristotle* has tax'd him with want of Conduct in the *Oeconomy of his Fable*; but this Censure being levell'd rather at the want of Artifice, than of Moral in the Plays of *Euripides*, I shall make no further use of it here. The character of this Author's works wou'd make us naturally expect, that he shou'd be more careful of this Article, than either *Æschylus*, or *Sophocles*, who aim'd more at the Pathetick. The Plays of *Euripides* betray all along an affected Ostentation of Learning, and as great an Ambition to be thought a Philosopher, as a Poet. For this reason he abounds more in Points, and Sentences of *Morality*, florid Harangues, and subtle Speculations, than *Sophocles*; but he does not touch the Passions, or raise the Concern of an Audience like him. And therefore whatever we may think of his Dialogues consider'd separately,

Character  
of the Plays  
of Euripides  
in general.

rately, and independant of one another, his Plays in the aggregate are far inferior to those of *Sophocles*.

*Euripides* has yet remaining nineteen *Tragedies*, to examin all which, as we have done those of *Sophocles*, wou'd be an impertinent, as well as a tedious labour, both to the Reader and my self. I shall therefore content my self to instance in a few of 'em, and refer those that have the Curiosity and Patience, to proceed further to the Author himself.

The *Orestes* challenges the first place upon the score of its Reputation, and the great Success it had on the revival of it, five hundred years after the death of the Author.

This play commences, where the *Electra* of *Sophocles* and his own conclude. <sup>Fable of</sup> *Orestes* by the help of his Sister *Electra*, having slain his Mother, is very much troubled in mind, and haunted by Furies, and desponds upon the account of his Guilt. *Tyndarus*, his Mother's Father, endeavours to revenge her death, and excites the People against him, who vote him to be ston'd to death with his Sister. *Menelaus*, with his Wife *Hele-*



na, and Daughter *Hermione*, arrives in the mean time and offers his assistance to his Nephew in this exigence, but is over-aw'd by *Tyndarus*, and deserts his Party. *Pylades* comes opportunely, and perswades *Orestes* to appear, and make his defence in person, which he does, but without success, yet upon his promise that his Sister and himself shall be their own Executioners, he is let go by the Mob upon *Parole*. Being return'd to his Sister, they consult about means of Safety. *Electra* advises him and *Pylades* to seize upon *Helen* and *Hermione*, to kill *Helen*, and to Article with *Menelaus* for their own safety, with a sword at *Hermione's* Throat; and if her Father wou'd not comply with their demands, first to dispatch her, then themselves. This Project is put in execution, and the Ladies are surpriz'd, *Apollo* rescues *Helen*, and appearing, reconciles *Menelaus* and *Orestes*, and makes a match betwixt him and *Hermione*, and betwixt *Pylades* and *Electra*, and promising happiness to 'em all, tells 'em, that *Helen* is made a Goddess, and so concludes the Play.

In this Play most of the Characters <sup>Characters</sup> are wicked, *Orestes* and *Electra* are Par- <sup>all vicious.</sup>  
*ricides*; *Tyndarus* is (in his heart at least) the *Murderer* of his Grand-children; *Menelaus*, the *Betrayer* of his Nephew, and Niece, whom he ought to have protected; *Helen*, an *infamous* Woman, and the accidental cause at least of the Miseries of a great part of *Asia* and *Europe*, yet clear of any intentional Guilt in this case; *Pylades* is engaged with his Friend in an unjust attempt to murder *Helen* and her Daughter; *Hermione*, who is next to a Mute in the Play, is the only unexceptionable Character.

This Play begins well, the Agonies <sup>Not of a</sup> of a guilty Conscience, the Despair, and <sup>piece all</sup> the Horrors of *Orestes* promise a good <sup>through.</sup> Moral: But the hopes of that soon vanish; for the first word of comfort from *Menelaus* dispels all his Anxiety for his crime, and converts it to a solicitude for his Safety. In order to this, he enters upon a piece of Villany, more execrable than that for which he was then prosecuted, because 'twas without provocation: A Feint of that kind had been an allowable Stratagem to have

M 4                      brought

brought *Menelaus* to Articles ; but to project it in earnest was an unparallell'd piece of Barbarity. But what after all is more surprizing and unnatural is, that the *Catastrophe* is happy, and the Parricides rewarded, and all this seems to be the result of *Electra's* latter contrivance, which however wicked was successful and prosperous,

The *Moral* ( if I may call it so ) of this Story. is properly this, that there is no dabbling in Villany, but that those that are once enter'd, must wade thro, if they will be safe, and justify one Crime by another. But that which makes the winding up of this Play more notorious, is, that the Gods are made the Arbiters of all ; *Apollo* appears in person, and justifies *Orestes*, and promises him his protection, and ensures the happiness of *Pylades* and *Electra*, who had been the sole Incendiary and Contriver of all this Mischief ; which is adding Impiety to the want of Poetick Justice, and making Providence accessory to Parricide, and the Gods Abbetors of Violence and Injustice, not to take notice of the Deifying of *Helena*, who, tho *Jove's* Daughter, is a Woman of a very

very infamous Character all through the Play.

I suppose the *Moral* of this Play will hardly rise in Judgment against the Moderns. Nor has the *Electra* of of the same Author any more reason, it being liable to the same exceptions with the former, only in this the Murther is perpetrated, in that but designed; in short, this Play is the ground work of the former, and the action of this gives the reason, and occasion of all that happens in t'other. Here likewise the Gods are impertinently brought in to finish that, which wou'd of it self have closed very naturally without 'em. For after the Death of *Ægisthus* and *Clytemnestra* there was nothing more to be done. But this Poet, who is very fond of Machines, tho unnecessary, after all's over brings down *Castor* and *Pollux* to condemn the Fact, acquit the Murtherers of their Sister, and transfer the Guilt to *Apollo*, whom they accuse of\* uttering a foolish Oracle.

in excess  
of sense.

However the Fable of this Play being the same with that of the *Electra* of *Sophocles*, we may do it the same Grace, and allow it the benefit of any *Moral* that



that may be raised out of it, tho not without some violence, as this Author has managed it. What that is I have already observed in the foregoing Remarks upon the *Electra* of *Sophocles*.

*Media, &c* The *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Ion*, *Hercules distracted*, and several other are likewise built upon various Models. In these, as in most of *Euripides's* Plays, the Gods are always at one end or t'other of the business; they are either the Promoters of the Crime, or the Protectors of the Criminals. All is acted by *Machine*, the *Action* is frequently forced, and the *Catastrophe* generally unnatural. Yet notwithstanding this extraordinary licence, which this Poet assumes in almost all his Plays, but very few of 'em are so modell'd as to be serviceable to Virtue upon that Score.

*Medea*, after a course of Murthers, having slain her own Brother, and Children with her own hands, and *Pelias*, *Creon*, and *Crensa* by her charms, is taken particular care of by *Phæbus*, and provided of a flying Chariot to make her escape from Justice in.

*Fable of  
the Hip-  
polytus.*

*Hippolytus* has the Character of a just, and a Pious Person, and his conduct all

all thro the Play, both in relation to his Mother in Law *Phædra*, and his Father, by whose curse he is devoted, and brought to ruine, justifies this Charactr, and he in the Agonies of Death expresses a greater concern for, and a more sensible impression of his Fathers misfortunes and afflictions, than his own. A Disposition so extraordinarily pious, one wou'd think, shou'd, if it might not exempt him from those disasters that attend the Infirmary of humane Nature, and the malignity of his Fellow Mortals, at least protect him from any supernatural calamities, and ensure the favour of Heaven to him. But he was a Votary to *Diana*, and his vow of Chastity gave such offence to *Venus*, who thought herself slighted, that she resolves his ruine, and declares her resolution, and the methods she intends to take to effect it, in the Prologue which she speaks. And she lays her Plot so, that by means of an antecedent Promise to *Thesens* she engages *Neptune* in the Destruction of an innocent Young Man, whose only crime is an obstinate, inviolate Chastity; and *Phædra*, who is her instrument, is involv'd in the guilt of a heinous, but  
 invo-

involuntary Crime. The confideration of the feveral Fables of thefe Plays cou'd furnifh the Audience with no venerable Ideas of their Gods, who cou'd be the Promoters, or Protectors of fuch horrid Actions ; nor cou'd any encouragement to Juftice and Morality be drawn from 'em, which afforded fuch examples of Partiality, and prejudice among their Deities, that the blackeft Crimes cou'd not forfeit their favour, nor the moft exemplary Virtue enfore it.

*Ion a moral Tragedy.*

Remarques fur le  
xix Chapitre de la  
poetique d'Aristote.

The *Ion* is reckoned by the Learned Monsieur *Dacier* among that kind of Tragedies, which *Aristotle* calls *Moral*, and which this judicious Commentator defines thus ; *The Moral Tragedy is a fort of Tragedy contriv'd purely for the formation of Mens manners, whose Catastrophe is always happy.* And in the Page immediately foregoing, *The Moral Tragedy* (fays he) *treats neither of Death, Torments, nor Wounds, but of the happinefs of fome Persons recommendable for their Virtue.* Here therefore one might reasonably expect a perfect Model of Virtue, and a exact Scheme of Manners ; for which reason it may feem juftly to challenge our confideration.

*Ion*

*Ion*, a Slip of *Crensa* by *Apollo*, is privately born, and expos'd by his Mother, is taken up by *Mercury* and conveyed to *Delpbi*, where he is found by the Priestesses, and brought up in the Temple of his Father, of which he is at length made the Treasurer, or Keeper of the rich Moveables, in which Office he discharges his trust faithfully. Thus far the Prologue spoken by *Mercury* informs the Audience of the History of *Ion* before the Play commences.

*Crensa* his Mother, having no Issue by her Husband *Xuthus*, repairs with him to the Oracle at *Delpbi*, to petition for an Heir. The Husband puts up his request according to form, and is answered, that the first man he shou'd meet in his return from the Altar, was his Son; this happens to be *Ion*, who is upon the faith of the Oracle received by him as his Son. *Ion*, who being a Foundling, was ignorant of his Parentage, in return joyfully acknowledges him to be his Father, and is proved of so honourable an Extraction. This enrages *Crensa*, who not suspecting the relation of *Ion* to herself, supposes him to be some by-blow of her Husbands, as *Xuthus* himself



self does, but begotten before his Marriage to *Crensa*. In this rage she resolves and attempts to poyson *Ion*, which is discovered, and *Ion* in revenge pursues her life. She takes refuge at the Altar, from whence while *Ion* is endeavouring to force him, the *Prophetess* interposes, and produces the Swathing Bands, and other things in which *Ion* was wrapt when found. These *Crensa* knows, and discovers him to be her own Son by *Apollo*; *Minerva* appears, and confirms her Story, and advises 'em both to conceal this circumstance from *Xuthus*, and concludes with a sort of *Epilogue*, predicting the happiness of *Ion*, and other Children, which *Crensa* was to have by her Husband,

Main Con-  
dition of  
Moral Tra-  
gedy neg-  
lected in  
this.

If this was designed for a *Moral Tragedy*, as Monsieur *Dacier* thinks, and as the Contrivance of the Fable, as well as the Catastrophe seems to argue, it must be confessed that *Euripides* has forgot the main circumstance. For the good Fortune of those Persons, whom he makes happy in the Conclusion is not owing to their Virtue or Prudence; but to the favour of *Phæbus*, who had too great a Personal Interest in 'em, to suffer 'em to miscarry.

*Crensa's*

*Crensa's* Character is vicious all along, *Crensa's*  
 she was with Child by *Apollo*, and privately *a wicked*  
 delivered, and to conceal her Shame, *Character:*  
 she exposes the Infant as a Prey to the  
 Wild Beasts, as she herself confesses to  
 her old Servant, and Confident, the  
 Contriver and Instrument of her intended  
 Villany afterwards.

*Κεὶ Τίδωνος, ὁ γυμνὸς, ὁμοῖον ἐκτεθῆκε.*

*He died a Prey to the Wild Beasts.*

Here she confesses herself guilty of a  
 Crime, that is capital in our Law, and  
 is so far from repenting, that she en-  
 gages immediately in the design of ano-  
 ther of a Dye something deeper, be-  
 cause Treachery and Violence enter the  
 composition; in this she is active in the  
 Murther, in the former she was only  
 Passive. This Character can hold forth  
 nothing of Instruction, except it teach  
 Women, that have given up their Ho-  
 nours, to secure their Reputations by  
 murdering their Bastards; and furious,  
 jealous Wives to destroy their Husbands  
 Children and Heirs by other Women.

The Character of *Ion* is indeed not so *Ion's Cha-*  
 criminal; his highest commendation is, *raiser in-*  
*different.*  
 that

that he had not imbezzled the Stores of *Apollo* committed to his keeping. Now, tho Faithfulness be very commendable in a Servant, yet his was never exercis'd in so superlative a way, or endur'd any such severe tryal, as might upon that score entitle him to the great Fortune and Preferment which beset him afterwards. His highest Merit was bare Honesty, enough to have procur'd him a Certificate now adays upon change of Service ; not to challenge any considerable Reward. He laid claim to no active virtues, his Innocence was his strongest Plea, and that too seems to be a little sullied at last by his too eager Prosecution of Revenge upon *Cressa*. A generous Heathen (without reaching the Pitch of *Christian* Morality ) would have forgiven, or slighted the Feeble Malice of a Woman, especially at that Critical Juncture, when he ought to have shewn himself worthy of his sudden exaltation by some extraordinary act of Generosity. But his collusion at last with his Mother to cheat *Xuthus* is a piece of Condescension so base, as forfeits all pretence to common merit or honesty. For he that is content to hold

his

his good Fortune by Trick and Imposture, don't deserve it.

Thus we see in this *Moral Play*, of the two fortunate Persons, one is wicked, and ought not to be drawn into Precedent, much less to be propos'd for an Example; t'others Virtue is of so dwarfish a size, and so weakly a Constitution, that 'tis not very likely to propagate, and by no means a proper Standard to measure full grown Worth by. And therefore this Play (tho we shou'd, with Monsieur *Dacier*, allow it to be of the *Moral* kind) is like to do no great service to Morality by the Design and Management of its Fable.

Because I have mention'd the *Hercules Furens*, I will not pass it absolutely over in Silence, tho it affords no great matter of reflection; having had occasion to take notice of the Character and Sufferings of *Hercules* in the *Trachiniae* of *Sophocles*. There is indeed this considerable difference to the disadvantage of this Play, in regard to the *Moral*, Art, and Beauty of it, that here the misfortunes of *Hercules* are wrought altogether by Machine: *Juno*, *Iris*, and *Lyssa* or *Madness* (which is here supposed a *Demon*) are

N

all,

Of no Service to Morality.

*Hercules Furens compar'd with the Trachiniae of Sophocles.*



all, and only concern'd in the contrivance ; whereas in *Sophocles* things are naturally brought about, and made the result of Jealousie and Credulity. What therefore in that is but obliquely charg'd upon the Gods, is here directly laid upon 'em. So that, what from the last Speech of *Hyllus*, and the *Chorus* is there urg'd against the *Moral* of that Play, holds more strongly against this. Besides the atrocity of the Fact, which extending here to the Lives of his Wife and Children, aggravates the guilt of *Juno*, who cou'd not limit her malice to his Person, without comprehending those Innocents, who by no crime of their own cou'd have incurr'd her displeasure.

These few instances may suffice to give us a true estimate of the care of *Euripides*, in the formation of his Fables in general, in relation to the Grand or General *Moral*.

Character  
of *Æschylus*.

*Æschylus* shou'd follow, who, tho first in order of time, comes naturally last into consideration, as affording very little upon this Topick. This Author seems scarce to have design'd any *Moral* to his Fables, or at least to have regard-  
ed

ed it very little. His aim was wholly at the Pathetick, and he deals almost altogether in Objects of Terror; accordingly his Flights are frequently lofty, but generally irregular, and his Verse rumbles, and thunders almost perpetually, but it usually spends itself, like a Wind-Gun, in Noise and Blast only. He sets out gloriously, launches boldly, blown up with a Tympany of Windy *Hyperboles*, and Buckram *Metaphors*; but he carries more Sail than Ballast, and his course is accordingly uneven; he is sometimes in the Clouds, and sometimes upon the Sands. In short, *Æschylus's* sole Care and Ambition seems to have been (as Mr *Bays* has it) to *elevate* and *surprize*; in the eager pursuit of which, he has miss'd many things, which are the lasting graces of his more temperate Successors. The Groundwork of his Plays are plain simple Stories, without either Plot or Moral, told only in the most pompous formidable manner the Poet cou'd invent, to strike a Pannick Terror into the Audience; and consequently they afford no great matter of reflection here. I shall therefore dismiss this Poet without any formal examina-

tion to this Article, and only present the Reader with one Instance of his neglect of *Moral*, which stares me in the Face in the very first Page of his *Promethews*.

Edit. Hen.  
Steph.

His Pro-  
metheus  
immoral.

*Power* and *Force*, two Poetical Persons, are sent by *Jupiter* to assist *Vulcan* in the chaining *Promethews* to a Rock. They begin the Prologue, and declare his crime, which was *communicating the Celestial Fire to Mortals*; and the reason of his Punishment, which was *that he might learn to acquiesce in the administration of Jove, and shake off his tenderness for Mankind*.

Κρ. & Β Τὸ σὺν γὰρ ἀνδρὸς παντόχῃ πυρὸς σέλας  
Θνητοῖσι καίψας ὅπασεν. τοιῷ σὲ δὲ τῷ  
Ἀμαρτίας σὸς δὲ θεοῖς δοῦναι δίκην.  
Ὡς ἂν διδάχῃ τῷ Διὶ τυρανίδα  
Στέργην, φιλευδρείου δὲ παῖδα τέτυκν.

Jupiter as-  
bus'd by the  
Poet under  
the Persons  
of Power  
and Force.

This reason is pretty singular and extravagant, that a Brother Immortal should be treated so inhumanely by *Jupiter*, and his Fellow Gods, only for his *Philanthropy*, or Love to Mankind; and must needs have a very serviceable effect upon Mortals. For no doubt but *Jupiter's* Altars must smook very plentifully,

fully, when Men were inform'd, that so well he stood affected towards 'em, that 'twas Capital in any of his Under-Gods to bear 'em any good will. This must needs impress upon 'em a great veneration for his Person, and zeal for his Service ; their Gratitude must needs work over abundantly for so signal a Grace.

That this was all *Prometheus's* offence <sup>For abuse</sup> *Vulcan* assures us in his reply. *Vulcan* <sup>back of</sup> *Vulcan.* seems to have some Bowels of Commiseration for this poor Devil of a God, and in a compassionate sort of Remonstrance tells him, *that this comes of his fondness of Mankind, and thereby provoking Jupiter, who was fierce, and implacable, as all new Governours are.*

τοιαῦτ' ἀπὸ τοῦ τῷ φιλαδριότητι τούτῳ.

— Διδὸς γὰρ δυσπαρεγγίῃ τοι φρίνεις.

ἅπανι δὲ τεχνῶν ἔστις ἀνὴρ κατὰ.

This account of *Jupiter* seems to countenance a harsher Translation, than I have given of the fore-going words *Διδὸς τυραννίδας*, and to expound 'em in the scandalous sense of Tyranny, rather than of a just and equal administration of Affairs.



After this Prologue I suppose no good Moral will be expected from this Fable; the rest of *Æschylus's* Fables are manag'd after a manner little more serviceable, for which reason I shall not tire the Reader with the examination of 'em.

Deficiency  
of the  
Greek  
Tragedy.

After the decease of this Triumvirate of Poets, the *Tragedy of Athens* disappears. Not but they had many Tragedians after 'em, but neither did they rise to a height of Reputation equal to these, nor did their works very long survive 'em that I know of. Here therefore we lose the view of the Ancient Tragedy, for above five hundred years together.

Tragedy as  
Rome.

The next sight we have of it is at *Rome*, where we find in all but ten *Tragedies*, which are all collected under the name of *Seneca's*, tho belonging (as many Learned men think) to several Authors. Of these nine are of Greek Extraction, all but one taken from Plays yet remaining to us. The *Medea*, *Hippolytus*, *Troas*, and *Hercules Furens* are taken from Plays all bearing the same names in *Euripides*, except the *Troas*, which, tho it bears the same name, yet is not upon the same argument with  
the

Bo row'd  
from the  
Greeks.

the *Troades* of *Euripides*, but is taken from the *Hecuba*, another Play of the same Poet. The *Oedipus*, and *Hercules Oetans*, are descended immediately from the *Oedipus Tyrannus*, and *Trachiniæ* of *Sophocles*. And 'tis very probable the *Thyestes* is owing to the same Author, tho the Greek Original be now lost. For 'tis not only certain that *Sophocles* wrote three Plays which bore that name, but the Model seems to bear more resemblance to the manner of *Sophocles*, than either of the other Tragedians. The *Agamemnon* plainly belongs to *Æschylus*, as does likewise the *Thebais*, in right of his *Ἐκ τῆς Θίβας*, tho the *Thebais* of *Seneca* being imperfect, it does not so plainly appear whether he copy'd it immediately from thence, or at second hand from the *Phœnix* of *Euripides*. The *Octavia* only is of Roman Original, its Author is uncertain. For 'tis justly suspected to belong to neither of the *Seneca's*.

This Author, (for Mr *Collier* seems to take all these Plays to be the work of one man) is censur'd and stands in some measure condemn'd, by Mr *Collier*, and therefore I should wave any other scru-

ting into his conduct, if I did not find him in some measure justified, and in a manner absolv'd upon the comparison with the Moderns.

Seneca the  
Philosopher  
suppos'd the  
Author of  
'em.

But, if we believe with those Prodigies of Letters, *Lipsius*, *Joseph Scaliger*, and *Heinsius*, and divers others very eminent for their Learning, *that we are beholding to the famous Seneca the Philosopher, for three at least of these Plays, the Medea, Hippolytus, and Troas, to which Farnaby adds the Oedipus*, we shall be oblig'd to pay more deference or respect to 'em, and not to pass a rash and unmannerly censure upon any of the remains of so illustrious an Author.

Seneca  
unduly as-  
pers'd by  
Mr Col-  
lier.  
P. 94.

But *Seneca* is not at present in *Mr Collier's* favour, he is declar'd an *injudicious, licentious Poet, upon whose liberties the Modern Poets proceed*; and therefore he is not to be receiv'd into Grace, till he has had the Penning of a Recantation for him. If *Mr Collier* did believe that *Seneca* the Philosopher was the Author of any of those Plays, he ought upon the merit of his other works, (by which he may at least pretend to vie with *Mr Collier* both zeal and service in the cause of Virtue)

Virtue) to have treated so excellent a Person with more respect and honour, than to have rank'd him with, and made him the Ringleader of those, whom he reckons *Atheists* and *Buffoons*. If he did not, he cou'd in Justice have done no less than set him clear of the Imputation, which by so rude and indiscreet a charge he has brought him under. For he cou'd not but know, that the learned Persons before-mentioned, whose Authority is of great weight amongst Men of Letters, had deliver'd their Opinions, that he was the Author of some of those Plays, especially the Judicious *Heinsius*, whom he cites, and I shou'd suppose he is well acquainted with, unless he does (which I suspect) like some Persons, that boast of their familiarity with great men, whom they have not the honour to know.

Had he known their Opinions in this matter, it had but been a becoming piece of Modesty to have laid his reasons for his dissent from 'em before his Reader; and not haughtily to have slighted their Authorities as not worth his notice. Or at least he ought not in good manners to have treated the Memory of that Philosopher



sopher at so scoundrel a rate. I suppose he will hardly justifie this Indignity from the misrepresentations that have been given of him. For, not to enter improperly into a dispute about the validity of those Reports here, whatever his private infirmities might be, we are sure from his works, that he bent his Studies and Endeavours to the service of Morality as heartily and successfully, as some Christians who with greater helps and stronger invitations, seem to value their Services much higher, with less reason.

Seneca  
careless of  
Poetick Justice.

However *Seneca*, tho he cannot without extream injury be accus'd of Writing for the encouragement of Debauchery, has been very careless of Poetick Justice in winding up his Fables. *Phædra* in the *Hippolytus*, and *Lycus* in the *Hercules Furens* are only the Malefactors that are brought to condign Punishment. For, as for *Oedipus*, we have had occasion already to clear him from the Aspersions of Guilt, tho his Misfortunes are the most notorious, and his Calamities the most deplorable of any upon the Antient Stage. *Ajax Oileus*, whom Mr. Collier produces as the only instance of this

Ajax and  
Oileus.

this kind, is indeed none. For he is no Person of the *Drama*, nor has his Fate any influence upon the success of the Action either way. He is only mention'd by *Eurybates*, in the relation which he makes of the Voyage of the *Greeks* from *Troy*, to encrease the horror of that Storm, of which he was then giving a description; which is no more to the business of the Play, than 'twou'd have been, if Mr *Congreve* in his *Mourning Bride* shou'd have taken occasion from the Wreck of his Hero on the same Seas, to have brought in the Storm that cast away the *Turkey Fleet*, and describ'd the manner of Sir *Francis Wheeler's* Wreck.

An improper instance of it.

But if *Seneca* has been remiss upon this Article he sins at least by Precedent, and may plead in his Justification, that he leaves the Story generally no worse than he found it. He built, as we have already observ'd, upon other mens bottoms, and cou'd not make any great alterations in the Foundations they had laid, without endangering the superstructure. *Aristotle* observes, in favour of the Poets of, or near his time, that taking the Fables of their Plays from

*Seneca* limited by Precedent.

Sto-

Stories vulgarly known either from History, or the works of some precedent Poet, they had not the liberty of receding so far from the receiv'd Tradition in the Contrivance, and disposition of their Fables, as was frequently requir'd to the forming a just and truly artificial Model. This may be urg'd with more justice in defence of *Seneca*, who, taking his Models from Authors of great reputation, wou'd have been thought guilty of a high piece of Presumption, if he had varied too much from Originals so well known and received. Besides, had he chang'd the Fortune of his Principal Persons he had effac'd the Images of 'em, which had been impress'd upon the Audience, who wou'd not have own'd, or acknowledg'd 'em for the persons they pretended to represent, who were best, or perhaps only by those marks to be distinguish'd.

*Hippolytus* of *Seneca* examined.

However, it must be granted, that in his *Hippolytus*, wherein he has ventur'd to deviate a little from the Original, he has done it very judiciously, and very much to the advantage of the *Moral*; the application of which he has thereby render'd not only more easie and natural,

tural, but it self likewise more useful, and instructive. In *Enripides* the Gods do all. His Persons move like Puppets by wires; *Venus* contrives and acts all. *Phedra's* a meer Machine, a passive Vehicle, that serves purely for the more cleanly conveyance of the Goddes's malice. The unraveling likewise is perform'd by Machine, *Pallas* descends to clear the Innocence of *Hippolytus*, and accuses *Venus*. In short, the Action is all forc'd and unnatural, and of consequence, the Moral, if any, must be strain'd.

*Seneca* has artfully avoided these inconveniences, by making the incestuous Love of *Phedra* spring from her own Infirmary, and the death of *Hippolytus*, the effect of her Revenge of his Scornfully rejecting her Passion, and her fear of his making a discovery of her Infamy to his Father. Her punishment by this means becomes just, which was not so in the *Greek*, and her Rage, Despair, Confession and Death, are the natural result of her Guilt and Folly. From the unhappy *Catastrophe* of this Lady,, matter of fair Instruction may be drawn to check such licentious Flames in their first-Birth, which if indulg'd draw after 'em such fatal consequences. And

More artificial than  
the *Hippolytus* of  
*Euripides*.

The Moral.

from



from the rash misplac'd imprecation of *Theseus*, Parents may be caution'd against too easie a credulity in such extraordinary cases, and to guard against such violences of Passion, as may extort Curses from 'em, that may return upon their own Heads, and involve themselves in the conclusion.

This Plot, as it stands in *Seneca*, is one of the neatest of Antiquity, and had the Author taken care to disencourage himself as happily from *Neptune*, as he has from *Venus* and *Minerva*, I see nothing inartificial in the disposition of it. But *Neptune* performing his part *extra Scenam*, this fault is the more pardonable, especially since 'tis originally the oversight of *Euripides*.

The rest  
those Copies  
from the  
Greek.

The rest of this Author's Plays varying little or nothing in the Fable from the Greek Originals, (those I mean, that we know, for the *Thyestes* of *Sophocles* is lost) whatever the faults of 'em may be in that respect, the *Latin* Author is not so properly accountable for 'em. The *Octavia*, being the only Tragedy of Roman Stock that remains to us, seems to challenge upon that Score some regard, whosoever was the Author of it. But being

*Octavia*  
illcontriv'd  
and inspid.

being rather a relation by way of Dialogue between the several Parties concerned of an unjust Tyrannick Action, in which there is neither Plot, Turn, Moral, nor Consequence; it wou'd be time lost to bestow an Examination upon it here.

Having thus run through the Tragedies of Antiquity, perhaps something more minutely, than may be thought requisite upon this Article, I shall not make many reflections upon the whole, but leave 'em to the further consideration of the Reader, after a Remark or two, concerning the Practice of the Ancients in general, in this respect.

It is observable, that the Ancients in the disposition of their Fables, seem to have had such very little regard to the Moral of 'em, they contented themselves with delivering their Instructions in wise sayings, scatter'd here and there up and down the Dialogue, or at the close of all; and only sought in their Fables matter and occasion of moving the Passions, which was generally done by way of Narration; to which end they furnish'd out their Dialogue with all the Force, Pomp, and Terroure of

*General  
Reflections  
on the An-  
cient Tra-  
gedy.*

Ex-

Expression they could, in which how well they have succeeded, is not to the present purpose to take notice.

*Aristotle's  
division of  
Tragedy.*

*Aristotle* had, no doubt, this practice of theirs in view, when he divided Tragedy into *Moral* and *Pathetick*. By this Division of Tragedy (*ratione Subjecti*) *Aristotle* plainly indicates, not only that the Subjects of the Ancient Tragedy were not all *Moral*, but likewise that it was not necessary, that they should be so. He instances in the *Phthiotides*, and *Peleus*, two Tragedies that are lost, as examples of the *Moral* kind; and besides this mention of 'em, I do not remember any notice that he has taken of this sort of Tragedy. For all his Rules seem to be calculated for the service of the *Pathetick* and *Implex* kinds.

*Moral Plays  
not much  
encouraged  
at Athens.*

From this silence of *Aristotle*, and the scarcity of 'em amongst the remains of the *Greek* Tragedy, we may reasonably collect, that this sort of Tragedy was not much in use amongst the Ancients themselves. For of all the Pieces of Antiquity the *Alcestis* of *Euripides* alone in my opinion deserves the name of a *Moral* Tragedy. In this Play both *Admetus*, and his Wife *Alcestis* are Persons

sons of strict Probity, and great Piety. *Alcestis* out of a singular Piety, offers her self to *Death* a voluntary Sacrifice, in lieu of her Husband. In the depth of *Admetus's* grief while his Wife was yet in the House, and the rites of Funeral unperform'd, comes *Hercules*, who observing the Family to be in Mourning, desires to be excus'd from troubling his House at so unseasonable a time. *Admetus*, unwilling to turn away such a Guest, dissembles the real cause of his Grief, and receives him nobly, but *Hercules* enquiring, and being inform'd of the Truth of *Admetus's* loss, combats *Death*, recovers *Alcestis*, and restores her to her Husband.

The *Fable* of this Play is truly *Moral*. *Alcestis* of Euripides  
*Alcestis* first by her Piety redeems her Moral  
Husband from *Death*; and *Admetus* afterwards by his *Generosity* and *Hospitality*, by means of *Hercules*, rescues her from the Grave. Thus they reciprocally owe their lives to each others Virtue. But if this Play be remarkably *Moral*, it is on the other hand monstrously unnatural, and consequently on that account is incapable of affording any extraordinary Pleasure, or Improvement.



ment. This probably might be the reason, why this sort of *Tragedy* was so little in request.

*Antients  
careless of  
the Gene-  
ral Moral  
of the Plays.*

From the whole it appears, that the *Antients* were not so careful of their Models, as Mr *Collier* pretends; but were on the contrary extremely negligent of the *Moral* in the *Fables* of their *Tragedies*. So that if one or two do afford a tolerable one, we may conclude by the slight notice they take of it, that they did not see it, or but casually found it there, rather than industriously sought it; and that we are more behold-ing to their luck, than Judgment or good Intentions for 'em. I grant this way of arguing not to be demonstrative, but it is not therefore unconvulsive. For since the sense of the *Antients*, is not any where (that I know of) delivered in exprefs terms concerning this matter, I take their Practice, backt by the Authority of *Aristotle*, to be a sufficient warrant for any conclusions, that shall be drawn naturally from 'em.

*Consequence  
of Mr Col-  
lier's Dis-  
say of Wi-  
sing!*

But if I wou'd indulge my self in the Liberties of Mr. *Collier*, and charge the *Antients* at that loose rate, that he does the *English Dramatick Poets*, I might not

not only tax 'em with negligence of their Morals, but with maliciously discouraging Vertue, and industriously promoting Villany, and Impiety. Nor wou'd the Poets suffer alone, all the great Men of Antiquity, that have commended their works, must share both the Guilt, and the Sentence; and *Aristotle* above the rest wou'd be even capitally criminal, his *Art of Poetry* is an inexhaustible Spring of Corruption, an everlasting Source of Infection, that has diffus'd its Venome over the whole World, and poison'd Mankind almost universally with *Villany*, *Impiety*, *Lewdness*, and *Debauchery*, of all kinds, for above sixteen hundred years together. This wou'd be high Treason among the Admirers of the *Antients*, yet 'tis nothing to one of Mr *Collier's* declamatory Rants, when he is in one of his Rhetorical Fits, and about to dress up a Character for *Aristophanes*, or any of the *English* Poets. After this disingenuous rate 'twere easie to turn the Satyr upon Ages long since past, and railly in his own words, those whom he himself recommends to the Imitation of our present Writers. An instance of this

kind mayn't be amiss to shew how easie 'tis to misrepresent the fairest intentions, and to improve Peccadillo's into Crimes of the blackest Dye, to make a hellish Plot of an oversight, and plunge Men over head and ears in Brimstone, for Humane infirmities.

*Turn'd up  
on the An-  
cients.*

P. 286.

'Tis a Jest, that the Antients wou'd make us believe, that *their design was Virtue and Reformation. In good time! They are likely to combat Vice with Success, who destroy the Principles of Good and Evil.* Wou'd Euripides perswade us that his aim is Virtuous, and his design Moral? Why then does he make choice of means so disproportionate to the end he pretends to drive at? Why is Vice represented successful, and Villany triumphant, but to encourage Men to the Practice of it? Why is *Medea*, the betrayer of her Father, and Country, a Poysoner, a Sorceress, and a Murderer, one that had run thro the whole compass, and measur'd all the Paces of Villany, suffer'd to make her escape? Or if she must not be punish'd, why are the Gods engaged in the matter, and she taken into the care of Providence, and furnished with means of Escape at the

the expence of a Miracle ? Why are *Orestes* and *Electra*, Parricides, taken immediately into the Protection of Heaven, under Despondency, and the lashes of a guilty Conscience ? Why are they encourag'd to bear up against the convictions of their own minds, and promis'd prosperity from Heaven ? Why is *Hippolytus* maliciously persecuted, and no less then two Deities employ'd in his ruine, only for being chaste by vow ? unless it be to shew us, that the World has been mistaken in its notions of Providence, that wickedness is meritorious, and Innocence a Crime, that Virtue, and Vice, of which the Philosophers prate so much, are but the Whimseys of *Hypochondriacks*, the Dreams of speculative *Enthusiasts*. Are these the *Socratick* Dialogues, and this the result of the Philosophers Lectures ? Is this the Admirer of *Socrates*, that was reciprocally so admir'd by him, that he cou'd sit whole days with Patience at the recital of his Plays ? If we may judge of one by the other, the Scholar was an Atheist, and his Master little better. Why else did he not reprove him for his blasphemous Fictions, and making the Gods the Actors, and Patrons of Villany, and re-

O 3

prehend



prehend him for mistaking the notions of Providence, confounding the Ideas of Virtue and Vice, and subverting the Maxims of Morality?

Socrates  
by this  
means con-  
demn'd.

Thus we see at this rate of declaiming not only *Euripides*, who affected Philosophy a little too much in his Poems, but even *Socrates* himself, the Boast of Antiquity, and the Glory of the Heathen World stands condemn'd, as an Abettour of *Murder*, *Incest*, and *Blasphemy*. Let us see whether *Æschylus* or *Sophocles* can acquit themselves any better.

Æschylus  
arraign'd  
by Mr Col-  
lier's Pre-  
cedent.

If *Æschylus* had taken due care of his designs, and built only upon Models of Virtue, we had never heard of his *Prometheus*. This Poet strikes at the Root of all Moral Virtue. He scorns to trifle, and pluck it down piece-meal, but blows it up all together. *Philanthropy*, or Charity is the Ground and Foundation of all Morality. This in the *Prometheus* is made a Crime, and a God sentenc'd to perpetual Punishment for his love to Mankind, which is all that is objected to him. This must needs create in Mankind a great Veneration, and impress a suitable  
Reve-

Reverence for the Gods, who are so very tender of 'em; in return for their oblations, that 'tis high Treason to bear 'em any good Will. No doubt, but Religion must shoot, and flourish mightily under such a hopeful Prospect of Reward.

*Sophocles* has been altogether as careful of Religion in his *Philoctetes*. That Spark, with his Carcass rotten, and full of aches and ulcers, hectors the Gods at a strange rate, and they think it worth their while to cajole him into their service. *Hercules* is sent to make him a fine Speech, and large promises to invite him to obedience, and allure him over to their Party. *Oedipus* is made Virtuous, Just, and Wise, but unhappy thro a Fatality, against which his Virtue is no security; Justice requires that he shou'd be rewarded and encouraged, but Providence will have him afflicted, and punisht with extremity of Rigour.

Can any thing be more disserviceable to Probity and Religion, than these Examples of Injustice, Oppression, and Cowardice in their Gods? They cherish those Passions, and reward those Vices, P. 127.

which 'tis the business of Reason to discountenance. They strike at the root of Principle, and draw off the Inclinations from Virtue, and spoil good Education: They are the most effectual means to baffle Discipline, to emasculate people's Spirits, and debauch their Manners. How many of the unwary have these Syrens devoured? And how often has the best blood been tainted with this Infection? What disappointments of Parents, what Confusion in Families, and what Beggary in Estates have been hence occasioned: And which is still worse, the Mischief spreads, and the Malignity grows more envenom'd. The Fever works up towards Madness, and will scarce endure to be touch'd.

*Extravagance of this way of declaiming.*

*\* An Island famous for plenty of Hellebore, used in the cure of Madnefs.*

I doubt not but the sober admirers of the Greek Tragedy will think that the fumes of Mr Collier's stumm'd Rant are got into my Head, and work me out of my Wits. And had he so far debauch'd my Judgment, as to make this my serious Opinion, I wou'd grant, that he and I were only fit to lead a Colony to settle at \* Anticyra, and dyet upon Hellebore. But tho I have no such lewd thoughts of the great Men of Antiquity,

tiquity, yet so far I shall presume to venture, (without trespassing against Modesty, or breaking rudely in upon the harmonious Judgment of the Learned for a long Succession of Ages) as to say, that Mr *Collier's* unreasonable Satyr comes as full upon the Antients whom he admires and commends, as upon the Moderns, whom he vilifies and condemns.

The *Modern Tragedy* is a Feild large enough for us to lose our selves in, and therefore I shall not take the Liberty of ranging thro' em at large, but for the most part confine my self to such as Mr *Collier* has already attackt. Upon presumption therefore that these are the weakest, if these can be defended, the rest I suppose may hold out of themselves.

I shall begin with *Shakespear*, whom notwithstanding the severity of Mr *Shaker-*  
*Rhimer*, and the hard usage of Mr *Col-*  
*lier*, I must still think the *Proto-Drama-*  
*tist of England*, tho he fell short of the  
 Art of *Johnson*, and the Conversation  
 of *Beaumont* and *Fletcher*. Upon that  
 account he wants many of their Graces,  
 yet

*Shakespear preferred to all the rest of the English Dramaticks.*



yet his Beauties make large amends for his Defects, and Nature has richly provided him with the materials, tho his unkind Fortune denied him the Art of managing them to the best Advantage.

Censure of  
Hamlet  
unjust.

His *Hamlet*, a Play of the first rate, has the misfortune to fall under Mr *Collier's* displeasure; and *Ophelia* who has had the luck hitherto to keep her reputation, is at last censur'd for Lightness in her Frenzy; nay, Mr *Collier* is so familiar with her, as to make an unkind discovery of the unfavouriness of her Breath, which no Body suspected before. But it may be this is a groundless surmise, and Mr *Collier* is deceived by a bad Nose, or a rotten Tooth of his own; and then he is obliged to beg the Poets and the Ladies pardon for the wrong he has done 'em; But that will fall more naturally under our consideration in another place.

Fable of  
Hamlet,  
before the  
commence-  
ment of the  
Action.

*Hamlet* King of Denmark was privately murder'd by his Brother, who immediately thereupon marry'd the Dowager, and supplanted his Nephew in the Succession to the Crown. Thus far before the proper action of the Play.

The

The late Kings Ghost appears to his <sup>Fable after</sup> Son young *Hamlet*, and declares how <sup>the Action</sup> and by whom he was murther'd, and en- <sup>ominances.</sup> gages him to revenge it. *Hamlet* here- upon grows very much discontented, and the King very jealous of him. Hereupon he is dispatched with Am- bassadors to *England*, then supposed Tributary to *Denmark*, whither a secret Commission to put him to Death, is sent by 'em: Which *Hamlet* discover- ing writes a new Commission, in which he inserts the names of the Ambassadors instead of his own. After this a Pirate engaging their Vessel, and *Hamlet* too eagerly boarding her is carried off, and set ashore in *Denmark* again. The Am- bassadors not suspecting *Hamlet's* Trick, pursue their Voyage, and are caught in their own Trap. *Polonius*, a Coun- cellour to the King, conveying himself as a Spy behind the Hangings, at an en- terview between *Hamlet* and his Mother, is mistaken for the King, and killed by him. *Laertes* his Son, together with the King contrive the Death of *Hamlet* by a sham Match at Foys, wherein *Laertes* uses a poyson'd unrebated Weapon. The King, not trusting to this single Trea- chery,

chery, prepares a poysoned Bowl for *Hamlet*, which the Queen ignorantly drinks. *Hamlet* is too hard for *Laertes*, and closes with him, and recovers the envenom'd weapon from him, but in so doing, he is hurt by, and hurts him with it. *Laertes* perceiving himself wounded, and knowing it to be mortal, confesses that it was a train laid by the King for *Hamlet's* Life, and that the foul Practice is justly turn'd upon himself. The Queen at the same times cries out, that she is poysoned, whereupon *Hamlet* wounds the King with the envenom'd weapon. They all die.

Poetick Justice exactly observed in this Play.

Whatever defects the Criticks may find in this Fable, the Moral of it is excellent. Here was a Murther privately committed, strangely discover'd, and wonderfully punish'd. Nothing in Antiquity can rival this Plot for the admirable distribution of Poetick Justice. The Criminals are not only brought to execution, but they are taken in their own Toyls, their own Stratagems recoil upon 'em, and they are involv'd themselves in that mischief and ruine, which they had projected for *Hamlet*. *Polonius* by playing the Spy meets a Fate, which  
was

was neither expected by, nor intended for him. *Guildestern* and *Rosencrans*, the Kings Decoys, are counterplotted, and sent to meet that fate, to which they were trepanning the Prince. The Tyrant himself falls by his own Plot, and by the hand of the Son of that Brother, whom he had murth'rd. *Laertes* suffers by his own Treachery, and dies by a Weapon of his own preparing. Thus every one's crime naturally produces his Punishment, and every one (the Tyrant excepted) commences a Wretch almost as soon as a Villain.

The Moral of all this is very obvious, *Moral of*  
it shews us, *That the Greatness of the Of- Hamlet.*  
fender does not qualifie the Offence, and  
that no Humane Power, or Policy are a suf-  
ficient Guard against the Impartial Hand,  
and Eye of Providence, which defeats their  
wicked purposes, and turns their dangerous  
Machinations upon their own heads. This  
Moral *Hamlet* himself insinuates to us,  
when he tells *Horatio*, that he ow'd the  
Discovery of the Design against his  
Life in *England*, to a rash indiscreet  
curiosity, and thence makes this Infe-  
rence.

Our



*Our Indiscretion sometimes serves as well,  
When our dear Plots do fail, and that  
shou'd teach us;*

*There's a Divinity, that shapes our ends,  
Rough hew 'em how we will.*

*Tragedies of  
this Author  
generally  
moral.*

The Tragedies of this Author in general are Moral and Instructive, and many of 'em such, as the best of Antiquity can't equal in that respect. His *King Lear*, *Timon of Athens*, *Macbeth*, and some others are so remarkable upon that score, that 'twou'd be impertinent to trouble the Reader with a minute examination of Plays so generally known and approved.

The other Tragedies upon which Mr *Collier* lets his indignation fall ~~to heavy~~, are so recent, and so common in the hands of every Play Reader, that 'tis almost an affront to their memories to trouble 'em with too particular a Recapitulation. But since we have oblig'd our selves to make good the Comparative innocence of the Moderns by instances upon the Parallel, Mr *Collier* can never desire fairer Play, than for us to undertake the defence of those very Plays, which

which he himself has markt out, and assigned us ; of which the next in order is the *Orphan*, against which he enters the Lifts as the *Chaplains* Champion, in whose Quarrel and upon whose account he is most implacably enraged.

The Model of this Play is something <sup>The Orphan.</sup> like that of *Oedipus*, except that in this the crime of *Polydore*, being voluntary, his guilt is real, and by consequence *Poetick* Justice is observ'd in his punishment, which is just. In this Tragedy likewise *Acasto*, *Castalio*, and *Monimia* are innocent, virtuous Characters, and their misfortunes undeserv'd, which made 'em naturally objects of Pity and Commiseration. The fatal consequences of *Polydore's* intemperate lust, and base rash action, afford matter of Terrour and Example. This Play is exactly constituted according to *Aristotle*, who requires only that Tragedy shou'd move Terrour and Compassion, which are the proper Springs, by which it works upon the <sup>The Moral good.</sup> Audience. In this it excells the Fable of the *Oedipus*, that it bears naturally a good Moral, and in the wretched Catastrophe of *Polydore*, and the miseries which

which his incontinence brought upon his Family, preaches Chastity to the Audience after the most effectual manner.

*Mr Collier's Zeal for the Pagan Priest-hood injurious to the Christian Ministry.*

But Mr Collier's in the humour now, and he scorns to circumscribe his kindness to the limits of the Christian Priest-hood, whether Orthodox, or Heterodox. For even the *Mufti* is allowed the benefit of his Clergy, and shares his Patronage. He is furiously provok'd at Mr *Dryden* for saying that *Priests of all Religions are the same*, when he himself at the same time makes no distinction, but treats the Priests of God Almighty, *Mahomet* and *Anubis* with the same respect. He is for strengthening his Party; and contracting an Alliance with all Faiths and Complexions; he ransacks *Europe, Asia, and Africa*, and enters into a religious League offensive and defensive with Sun-burnt *Africans*, and Monsters of the *Nile*. To this end, he labours hard to find out some relation between the *Mufti* and the Bishops, and very dutifully strains to extend the scandal from *Africk* to *England*, that what is said of their Arch-Priest may reflect upon our Prelates. The most bigotted  
*Mussul-*

*Mussulman* of 'em all cou'd not have acted more for the service of their Priests, than to have shifted the reproach from them to ours. But I hope there is no such Sympathy between 'em (as *Mr Collier* injuriously fancies) and that to break the *Musti's* wou'd not make our Bishops Heads ach, or his black and blue be seen in their Faces. Those worthy great Men, who are the honour of both our Church and Nation, have little reason to thank him for endeavouring to ally 'em to those, that must of necessity, putting the mildest construction upon their actions, be either gross Fools or rank Knaves; Fools if they believe, and Knaves if they help on the cheat and imposture of *Mahomet* without believing. Thus *Mr Collier* puts a grosser affront upon our Religion and Clergy, than any *Mr Dryden* has done, and his reproof deserves a severer correction, than t'others fault. This perhaps is a liberty too great to be indulg'd in any one but *Mr Collier's* dear self, and therefore to chastize *Mr Dryden's* Presumption and Insolence for but seeming to invade his fancied Property, he falls most outrageously upon his *Don Sebastian*.

P

The



Don Se-  
bastian a  
*Religious*  
*Play.*

The Subject of this Play bears a very *Religious Moral*, and consonant to the Tenour of the 2d Commandment shews, that the Punishment of Mens crimes, shall extend not only to their own persons, but if unrepented shall reach their Posterity likewise. In this Fable *Muley Moloch*, a Tyrant and an Usurper, *Bendnecar* a crafty Villain and a Traytor, the *Musti* a rascally Hypocrite and a Traytor. These three therefore are justly rewarded for their own proper Demerits. The Tyrant falls by Treachery, the treacherous Minister by publick Justice, and the Hypocrite is unmaskt, depos'd, and his Estate confiscated. *Sebastian* and *Almeyda* are Characters of extraordinary Virtue, *Sebastian* appears just and brave, and *Almeyda* chaste and constant to an Heroick Pitch. Their offence was involuntary, and a Sin of Ignorance, the unhappy consequence of the transgression of their Parents, and their Punishment is proportion'd very well to the nature of their Trespass. For tho Incest be a Sin of a very black Dye, yet their Ignorance of the nearness of their Blood washes away their Guilt, and makes it their misfortune, not their Crime. In this  
case

case a bare Separation wou'd be a sufficient Justification of their Innocence. But a Judgment hanging over their heads for the sin of their Parents, to divert that something more mortifying was necessary, and therefore a voluntary abdication, exile, and a recluse religious Life are thrown in by way of Penance to make weight, and give the attonement its due complement. But lest the true *Moral* shou'd escape the Audience, the Poet has taken care to fix, and sum up in the four concluding Lines

*Let Sebastian and Almeyda's Fate  
This dreadful Sentence to the World  
relate,  
That unrepented crimes of Parents dead,  
Are justly punish'd on their Childrens  
heads.*

This Moral needs no defence, and wou'd plead successfully for its Author, and excuse many little Slips before any Judge less partially severe than Mr Collier.

The *Cleomenes* of the same Author Reason of Mr Collier's answer to the stands indicted upon the same score, Cleomenes that is, for being too free with the Priests  
P 2 of nes.

of *Apis*. For tho that been't the only Allegation against this Play, 'tis apparently the sole ground. Thus Mr *Collier* as well as Mr *Dryden*, sets Priests of all Religions upon the same Foot. So they be but Priests, 'tis no matter to whom, he expects they shou'd be respected and reverenc'd; the compliment must be paid to their Livery, whether it be Christs or the Devils. Else why are the *Mufti*, and the Priests of *Apis* so much his Concern? Why all this heat in the cause of Infidels and Idolaters, and those none of the simple deluded Rout, but the Arch Jugglers, and Managers of the Cheat.

Moral  
wanting to  
the Cleo-  
menes.

In this Play he has forgot, or overlook'd his greatest advantage, which is the want of *Moral*. His Passion had got the upperhand of his Judgement, and push'd him headlong on to the attack, no matter where. In this Play Poetick Justice is altogether neglected, Virtue is every where depressed, and calamitous, and falls at last unreveng'd in the ruine of *Cleomenes*, *Pantheus*, *Cleanthes*, *Cleonidas*, *Cratificlea*, and *Cleora*. Vice revels all along, and triumphs

triumphs at length in the persons of *Ptolomy*, *Cassandra*, and *Sosybius*. The Fidelity of *Cleomenes* to his Nuptial Vows is the destruction of himself and all his Friends, while the Luxury of *Ptolomy*, the Wantonness and Infidelity of *Cassandra*, and the Treachery of *Sosybius*, insult in security unfortunate Virtue.

'Tis true, *Sosybius* in the close seems to Moral become a Convert, and pretends to pay justice extraordinary honours to the Body of the dead Hero. From whence we may draw this inference, *That Virtue has its altars tho neglected, even in the most profligate Breasts, and that the most inveterate of its Enemies will confess its Charms, when they no longer dread its power.*

Mr *Dryden* has confin'd himself a The Poet little too near the Story, had he asserted too faithful to the Hi- his right, and taken the Liberty of a story. Poet, he might have improv'd the *Moral* very much by sending *Sosybius*, *Cassandra*, and *Ptolomy* to attend *Cleomenes* to the other World. For (with Submission to Mr *Dryden's* better Judgment) I see no necessity for letting the *Curtain* fall so immediately upon the Death



of *Cleomenes*. The fall of his Hero ought to have drawn after it a train of Consequences fatal to the Contrivers of it ; the ruines of a Hero of his size and weight ought to have crush'd those feeble *Ægyptians*. Had the rage and despair, that might naturally be supposed in a Woman of *Cassandra's* furious temper, upon the disappointment of her licentious ungovernable Flame, been wrought up to the destruction of *Sosybins* and herself, *Magas* might have made his appearance in Person, to have finish'd the business, and dispatch'd *Ptolemy*. All this might have been done without unnaturally stretching, or making the action double. By this means *Treachery*, *Lust*, *Infidelity*, *Luxury*, *Conardice*, and *Cruelty*, had all met their due reward. But the Poet by tracking too closely the Steps of the Historian has lost the *Moral*, which, had he been guided by, and depended absolutely upon his own Judgment, we had no doubt been indebted to him for.

*Mourning  
Bride.*

The next and last Tragedy I shall instance in is the *Mourning Bride*. I have had occasion already to say something of the Observation of Poetick Justice

Justice in this Play, but this being the proper place, I shall take it a little more particularly into consideration.

The Fable of this Play is one of the <sup>Fable very</sup> most just, and regular that the Stage, <sup>just and regular.</sup> either Antient or Modern, can boast of.

I mean, for the distribution of Rewards, and Punishments. For no virtuous person misses his Recompence, and no vitious one escapes Vengeance. *Manuel* in the prosecution and exercise of his Cruelty and Tyranny, is taken in a Trap of his own laying, and falls himself a Sacrifice in the room of him, whom he in his rage had devoted. *Gonsalez* villanous cunning returns upon his own head, and makes him by mistake kill the King his Master, and in that cut off, not only all his hopes, but his only Prop and Support, and make sure of his own Destruction. *Alonso*, his Creature and Instrument, acts by his instructions, and shares his Fate. *Zara's* furious Temper and impetuous ungovernable Passion, urge her to frequent violences, and conclude at last in a fatal mistake. Thus every one's own Wickedness or Miscarriage determines his Fate, without shedding any

Malignity upon the Persons and Fortunes of others. *Alphonso* in reward of his Virtue receives the Crowns of *Valentia* and *Granada*, and is happy in his Love ; all which he acknowledges to be the Gift of Providence, which protects the Innocent, and rewards the Virtuous. *Almeria*, whose Virtues are much of the same kind, and who Sympathiz'd with him in his afflictions, becomes a joynt Partner of his Happiness. And *Garcia*, tho a Servant of the Tyrant, and Son of the treacherous, ambitious Statesman, yet executing only his Sovereigns lawful Commands, and being untainted with his Fathers guilt, and his Principles undebauch'd, is receiv'd into *Alphonso's* favour.

Moral excellent.

All this as well as the *Moral* is summ'd up so fully, and so concisely in *Alphonso's* last speech, that 'twere injustice not to give it in the Poets own words.

(To Alm.) Thy Father fell, where he design'd my Death.

Gonzalez and Alonzo, both of Wounds  
Expiring, have with their last Breath  
Confest  
The

*The just Decrees of Heaven, in turning  
on*

*Themselves their own most bloody Pur-  
poses,*

*(To Garcia————— O Garcia*

*Seest thou, how just the hand of Hea-  
ven has been ?*

*Let us, that thro our Innocence survive,  
Still in the Paths of Honour persevere,  
And not for past, or present ills despair :  
For Blessings ever wait on virtuous  
deeds ;*

*And tho a late, a sure Reward suc-  
ceeds.*

These I think are all the *English* Tragedies, which Mr *Collier* has by name excepted against. Taking therefore our View of the Modern Tragedy from that quarter, which he has allotted to draw a Prospect of it in, I shall leave it to the Reader to judge, whether have raised the more beautiful structures. But if we can with these Forces, which our Enemies have raised for us, make head, and maintain our ground against the united strength of all Antiquity, what might have been done, had we had the lifting, and fixing 'em our selves. I



*Advantages  
of the Mo-  
derns over  
the Anti-  
ents in the  
Morals of  
their Fa-  
bles.*

*Providence  
not em-  
ployed to  
promote Vil-  
lany.*

*Nor to op-  
press Vir-  
tue.*

*Nor to pro-  
tect Male-  
factors.*

I shall only take notice of two or three things which are apparently the indisputable advantage of the *Moderns* over the *Antients*, in respect of the General *Moral* of their Fables.

1st, That they never are at the expence of a Machine to bring about a wicked Design, and by consequence don't interest Providence in promoting Villany; as the Antients have notoriously done in many of their Plays; of which number are the *Electra* of *Sophocles*; the *Electra*, *Orestes*, *Hippolytus*, *Ion*, and others of *Euripides*, and the *Thyestes* of *Seneca*.

2dly, That they never engage Providence to afflict and oppress Virtue, by distressing it by supernatural means, as the Antients have manifestly done, by making their Gods the immediate Actors in or directors of the misfortunes of virtuous persons, as in the *Prometheus in Chains* of *Æschylus*, the *Oedipus* of *Sophocles*, the *Hippolytus* and *Hercules furens* of *Euripides*, the *Oedipus* and *Hercules furens* of *Seneca*, and divers others of Antiquity.

3dly, That their *Malefactors* are generally punished, which those of the Antients seldom were; but if they escape

cape, the Moderns don't provide 'em with a miraculous delivery, or have recourse to such extraordinary Methods as exceed the reach of Humane Force or Cunning, so as to entitle Providence to the Protection of 'em, which was the frequent Practice of the Antients; as in the *Electra* of *Sophocles*; the *Medea*, the *Orestes*, the *Electra*, and others of *Enripides*; the *Medea* of *Seneca*, &c. Modern Poets more Religious than the Antients.

From this short review of the different conduct of the Antient and Modern Tragedians, we may see with how much more respect to Providence, and the Divine administration, our Poets have behaved themselves, than they; and how far the Ballance of Religion inclines to our side. I suppose no one can be so silly, as to think, that I argue here for the truth of their Faith, but the measure of it in their respective persuasions, in which the advantage is infinitely on the side of the *English Stage*.

The *Fable* of every Play is undoubtedly the Authors own, whencesoever he takes the Story, and he may model it as he pleases. The *Characters* are not so; the Poet is obliged to take 'em from Nature, and to copy as close after her, as he is able. The Fable of the Poets disposal. Characters and Expressions not so.

be said for the *Thoughts* and *Expressions*, they must be suited to the Mouth and *Character* of the Person that speaks 'em, not the *Poet's*. It is not what is right or wrong in the *Poet's* Judgment, but what is natural, or unnatural for a Person of such a *Character* upon such an occasion to say, which he is to consider, and for which he is accountable only, as well by the rules of *Moral* as *Poetical* Justice. When therefore we find any thing in Plays that sounds amiss, we must examine whether it be proper to the *Character* or not, before we condemn the *Poet*, whom we may otherwise arraign as *Mal a propos*, as a Judge would the Kings Evidence, if he should prefer an Indictment against 'em for speaking Treason in their Depositions.

The Fable  
is only the  
Evidence of  
the Poets  
Opinion.

The *Fable* therefore being the main spring of the Machine in Tragedy, and the *Poet's* own proper Workmanship, 'tis by the temper and disposition of that, that we are to feel the *Poet's* Pulse, and find out his secret affections. Not but that we may err sometimes in our Judgments of the *Poet's* *Morals* on the other hand. For 'tis possible, that the

*Poet's*

*Poet's Morals* may be very good, yet the Man's stark naught, that is, that a man may be a good *Moral Poet*, yet a bad Man. So on the other hand we may falsely measure his Manners by his management, and impute to Malice and Design those faults, which flow from want of Judgment or Indiscretion. This is hard measure, but such as Mr *Collier* has been very liberal of to the *Poets*. It wou'd be a very uncharitable Error, shou'd we at any time hear the sacred mysteries of our Faith poorly explained, or weakly defended out of the Pulpit, if we shou'd conclude, that the Preacher played booty and betrayed the cause he pretended to plead for: And I doubt it wou'd fall heavy upon many, that now pass for honest and good Christians, I hope with justice, if their Faith were to be measured by their Performance, and their Integrity by their parts. But it wou'd be much more unjust to rate all the rest of their order by the deficient Standard of a few. Yet thus Mr *Collier* proceeds against those, to whom he thinks fit to oppose himself. And yet even thus they wou'd not have much occasion to fear his malice, if he

*Mr Col-  
lier's a  
false, and  
perverse  
Measure.*

wou'd



would proceed against 'em the proper way, and not charge as their private and real sense, the Sentiments, which they are obliged sometimes to furnish Villains and Extravagants with in conformity to their Characters, while he denies 'em the benefit of those many excellent and pious Reflections abounding in their works.

*The Fable  
the Engine  
of greatest  
and most  
secret Ex-  
citation upon  
the Aud-  
ience.  
P. 95.*

Certainly had our Poets any such lewd Design of *confounding the Distinctions between Truth and Fiction, between Majesty and a Pageant; of treating God like an Idol, and bantering, the Scriptures like Homer's Elysium and Hesiod's Theogonia,* it would appear in the Fable, which is the part, as we have observ'd, that discovers most of the Poets proper Opinion, and gives him the fairest opportunity of stealing it artificially in, and poysoning the Audience most effectually with least Suspicion. For the the Fable, if skilfully contriv'd, be the Part which operates most powerfully, yet it works after a manner least sensible. We feel the effects without suspecting the cause, and are prejudiced without looking after a reason. If the Poets have any such villanous Plot against

Virtue

Virtue and Religion, they are certainly the most negligent Fellows, or the most unexperienced in the world to overlook the only place of advantage upon the whole Stage for their mischievous purpose, where they might work their Mines unmolested, and spring 'em undiscover'd to most, and do the greatest execution with the least alarm to the Enemy. But they make War like *Dutchmen*, and sell their Enemies Ammunition to spend upon themselves. For all their Fables are contriv'd and modell'd for the service of Virtue and Religion, and levell'd against themselves, if they be such great Enemies, and so remarkably disaffected, as Mr Collier says they are. But perhaps he may, either thro mistake or malice, misrepresent the matter; and what was scoffingly said by the *Turks* to the *Poles*, may be seriously applied to the case before us by both Parties, that *they did not know of any War betwixt 'em*.

From the management of the *Fables* Not abused of our Poets, which, being the Princip- to any ill al, and most Efficacious part of their end by our Plays, undoubtedly employ'd most their Poets. care, 'tis plain that Mr Collier has given the

the World a false alarm, and endeavours to set 'em upon those as Subverters of Religion and Morality, that have with abundance of art and pains labour'd in their service, and rack'd their Inventions to weave 'em into the most Popular diversions, and make even Luxury and Pleasure subservient and instrumental to the establishment of Moral Principles, and the confirmation of Virtuous Resolutions.

Apology for  
the Anti-  
ent.

Before I take leave of Tragedy upon this Head, I must take notice to the Reader, that in this Parallel betwixt the *Antient* and *Modern* Tragedy, I have not wrested any thing to the unjust Prejudice of one, or favour of t'other. Nor, tho I find most of the Antient Fables defective in the general *Moral*, do I charge 'em with any design of undermining the Interest, or lessening the credit and esteem of Virtue. The *Moral* and the *Pathetic* were in their days distinct Branches of Tragedy (as we have already observ'd from *Aristotle*) of which their Poets in all probability made choice, according to the encouragement they observ'd 'em to meet with. If therefore we find few  
*Moral*

*Moral* Plays amongst the remains of those extraordinary Persons the *Greek* Tragedians, we may fairly presume, that they did not take at *Athens*, otherwise they would have been more cultivated. For this reason probably it was, that *Aristotle* took so slender notice of *Moral* Tragedy, as not thinking it worth while to lay down rules for the practice of that, which was no longer in use, or esteem amongst his Countrymen in his Time. Nor did this dis-esteem of *Moral* Plays proceed from any propensity to, or Habit of Vice peculiar to that Age, which might give 'em a dis-relish for Virtuous Entertainments. The contrary of this is evident from several of those Tragedies, which succeeded at *Athens*, the Discourse in which is frequently *Moral* and Instructive, tho' the Fable it self be not. But *Moral* Tragedy not admitting such Incidents as were proper to move Terror or Compassion, the Springs of Passion were wanting, and consequently the Audience were but weakly affected with such sort of representations.

The *Moderns*, who were sensible of the use of one, and the power of t'other

*Moral*  
Plays not  
esteem'd at  
*Athens*.

*Moral and*  
*Pathetick*  
*reconciled,*  
*and united*  
*by the Mo-*  
*derns.*

Q

fort





his Fault, as the most proper Subject for Tragedy; which is directly opposite to this Rule, which requires, that the fortune of every one shou'd be adjusted to his Merit, whether good or bad. 'Tis true, *Aristotle* thinks, that 'tis inconsistent with the regard that is due to Mankind, to represent such revolutions in the Fortunes of Men, as shall make Persons eminently Virtuous unhappy, or notoriously wicked successful and prosperous. But I don't find that he made their proper Demerits the Standard, or immediate Rule for Squaring their future Fortune. And if we consider the examples he produces to his own Rule, we shall perhaps be induc'd to believe, that he did not insist upon a very rigorous observation of it. For of his two instances, *Oedipus* was (as we have already observ'd) a very virtuous Person, and *Thyestes*, according to the traditions remaining concerning him, a very wicked One. So that even while he is laying down his Rule, he seems to indulge a latitude in the observance, and to justify any Liberties, that may be taken with it, by the Precedent of the

best Play, not only of *Sophocles*, but of all Antiquity.

*Monſieur  
Dacier's  
exception  
to Monſieur  
Corneille  
answered.*

*Monſieur Dacier* ( who, according to the humour of most Commentators, will allow no slips in his Author ) strains hard to reconcile the examples to the Rule. He charges *Monſieur Corneille* with making an unjust exception, for want of understanding rightly, the words ἀμαρτία τῆς. I shall not undertake to Arbitrate the point of *Monſieur Corneille's* Learning, but I think his observation just, and yet in full Force, and *Monſieur Dacier's* answer, however Learned, no better than an Evasion. In enumerating the good qualities, and summing up the Character of *Oedipus*, Mr *Dacier* omits his *Piety* towards his Country, and places the service of destroying the *Sphinx* to the account of his ambition, and the reward of the Crown tacked to it. His *Piety* I have already taken sufficient notice of elsewhere, and for his ambition let *Sophocles* answer, who tells us otherwise in the concluding Lines ;

Ὀδῖπ' οὐ ζήλου πολέταιν, οὐ τύχαις ἐπιβλέπων.

*Who affected not base Popularity, nor  
counted Fortune.*

This

This may suffice to clear him from the imputation of Vanity and Ambition, with which Monsieur *Dacier* loads his Character, and added to the rest, prove him an excellent Person; one that, according to *Aristotle*, was too good to suffer in so extraordinary a manner.

To digress no farther, I think we are obliged to the *Modern Tragick Poets* for the introduction of Poetick Justice upon the Stage, and must own, that they were the first that made it their constant aim to instruct, as well as please by the Fable. The *Antients* brought indifferently all sorts of subjects upon the Stage, which they took from History or Tradition, and were therefore more solicitous to make their stories conform to the relation, or to the publick Opinion, than to Poetick Justice, or the Propriety of Tragick Action. By this means all hopes of a *Moral* was cut off, or if by chance the story afforded any, we are more obliged to the Poets luck for it, than to his Skill or Care. Thus the *Moral*, the highest, and most serviceable improvement that ever was, or ever can be



made of the *Drama*, is of *Modern* Extraction, and may very well be pleaded in bar to all claim laid in behalf of the Antients, to preference in point of Morality, and service to Virtue, as likewise in answer to all Objections made to the Manners and Conduct of the *Modern* Stage in general.

Modern  
Stage on  
this account  
preferable  
of the An-  
tient.

Thus the *Modern* Stage, against which Mr *Collier* maliciously declaims with so much bitterness, is upon this account infinitely preferable to the *Athenians*, which he commends and admires, and that which he rails at as the bane of Sobriety, and the Pest of Good Manners, is prov'd the most commodious instrument to propagate Morality, and the easiest, and most palatable Vehicle to make Instruction go down with effect. But the Violence and Partiality of some observe no bounds of Justice, and admit of no check from Modesty or Reason. But I shall take leave here, and pass on to the Fable of *Comedy*, against which Mr *Collier's* spight is more particularly levelled.

Fable of  
Comedy  
considered

The Fable of *Comedy* will give us very little trouble, if we consider rightly the Nature and Business of this part  
of

of the *Drama*. *Comedy* deals altogether in Ridicule, and its Subject consequently must be such as affords matter of ridiculous Mirth. All its Machinations tend to the exciting that ill natur'd titillation, which carries scorn and contempt along with it. Its business is to correct, and hinder the spreading of Folly and Knavery, by making 'em ridiculous, and to reform Rascals and Coxcombs by exposing 'em. *Aristotle* therefore has very judiciously defined Comedy *μίμησις παυλοτέρων καὶ, ἢ μάλιστα κατὰ πᾶσαν κακίαν ἄλλα τῷ ἀίχρῳ δεῖ τὸ γελοῖον μιμεῖν*. *The Imitation of the baser sort of People, not in all kinds of Villany, but in the ridiculous part, which is one sort of Turpitude.*

The Action of *Comedy* must be suited to the Actors, who are the baser sort of In Comedy the Action and Persons low. People, and consequently can't be of any great importance either in its nature or effects, and therefore can afford no extraordinary Moral. By the baser sort of People, Persons of low Extraction or Fortune are not here meant, but Persons who by their practices and Conduct have expos'd themselves to Scandal and Contempt. From the Nature therefore, and quality of the Actors nothing great

or generous can be expected from *Comedy*. The Duping of an old Knave, the culling of a Coxcomb, the stealing of an Heiress from a Mercenary Guardian, are the usual exploits of *Comedy*; wherein tho Gentlemen are sometimes concerned, yet they are, or ought always to be such, as have some blemish, or other upon 'em, otherwise they are not fit for the business they are engag'd in. *Comedy* seems to be designed to teach Men Civil Prudence, and a convenient Management in respect of one another, rather than any thing of Morality; and their private duty. There their misfortunes and disgraces are all the immediate result of their own Folly and Mismanagement, and may therefore very well cause men to reflect upon that want of Wit and Caution, which caused themselves or others to miscarry, and teach 'em to be more wary for the future ; but it wou'd hardly confer any Grace, or mend their Principles.

The correction of Folly the proper business of Comedy

The business of *Comedy* being ridicule, those Vices only fall under its correction, that are capable of being made ridiculous, and those only after such a manner as may raise Scorn and Con-

Contempt. For this reason *Comedy* seems to be more naturally disposed for the cure of Mens Follies, than their Vices, those running more naturally into ridicule than these, which are more apt to raise Indignation and Aversion, and are the proper instruments of Tragedy. Not but that Vice too may sometimes be seasonably corrected in *Comedy*, but then it must be join'd with, and wear the Livery of Folly, to help to make it ridiculous, and the object of Scorn, rather than Indignation.

Hence it will appear, what sort of <sup>Perfect Vir-</sup>Persons are most proper to be employed <sup>the exclud-</sup> in *Comedy*, which dealing altogether <sup>ed the Co-</sup> in Stratagem and Intrigue, requires <sup>mick</sup> <sup>Stage</sup> Persons of Trick and Cunning on one hand, and easie credulous Folks on the other, otherwise the Plot will but go heavily forward. By this means all Characters absolutely perfect are excluded the *Comick* Stage. For what has a Man of pure Integrity to do with Intrigues of any kind? He can't assist in the execution of any design of Circumvention without forfeiting his Character; and to bring such a Character upon the Stage to be practic'd upon, is such  
an



an outrage to Virtue, that the most licentious of our Poets have not dar'd to venture upon it.

*Some Infirmity required to qualify a Character for Comedy.*

I grant that 'tis neither necessary, nor convenient, that all the Characters in *Comedy* shou'd be vicious, that were to abuse mankind, with a scandalous representation. But I maintain, that they ought all to have some failing or Infirmity, to qualify 'em for the business of the Place. Men of Honour may be made use of to punish Knaves, as Knaves to cure Fools, but their honour ought not to be too strait-laced, too squeamish and scrupulous. They must be Persons of some Liberty, that out of an over-niceness will not balk a well laid design, and spoil a Project with too much honesty. Men of Honour may be men of Pleasure; nay, and must be so too, or we do 'em wrong to make 'em appear in such Company, as *Comedy* must bring 'em into.

*No Gentlemen but men of pleasure fit for Comedy.*

What other natural occasion can be assigned for embroiling a Gentleman of Quality, with Usurers, Pimps, Sharpers, Jilts and Bullies, but the extravagance of his Pleasures? which they may all serve in their several capacities.

The

The Usurer with his Wife, his Daughter, or his Money; the Pimp in his Intrigues; the Jilt, the Sharper, and the Bully in their respective Offices may assist his Revenges, and be useful Engines in those designs, where 'tis not proper for himself to appear. That no Gentlemen but of this sort shou'd be brought upon the *Comick* Stage, I think, is so plain, as well from *Aristotle's* Definition, as from the Nature and Business of the Place; that he that disputes it forfeits all Pretence to Judgment in these matters. I mean no Gentlemen of Wit and Sense, but such as these. For Fools of what Quality soever are the proper Goods and Chattels of the Stage; they are the wrecks of understanding, which Poets, as Lords of the Mannor of Wit from immemorial Prescription, have an uncontested Title to, and may dispose of, as they see fit.

A true *Comick* Poet like a good Droll Painter, ought not to make his whole Piece ridiculous, and consequently ought not to draw any Face that is so regular, as not to have something amiss either in Feature or Complexion. To put

*Comick  
Poetry and  
Droll  
Painting  
compar'd.*

put a Gentleman of sound Sense and perfect Morals into *Comedy*, wou'd be as unnatural, as to draw *Cato* dancing amongst the Boors at a Dutch Wedding. It does not therefore follow, that none but Rakes and Scoundrels must pass for Gentlemen in *Comedy*. A Gentleman of Wit and Honour may be judiciously introduced into it, but he must be a man of wild unreclaim'd honour, whose Appetites are strong and irregular enough, to hurry him beyond his discretion, and make him act against the Conviction of his Judgment on the return of his Reason. Such a Character as this no more is unnatural, than to see a drunken Gentleman frolicking with the Mob, or kissing a Link-Boy.

Such Characters real and common

Nothing is more frequent than to meet in our common Conversation, and affairs of Life, with Gentlemen of this sort, who, tho they may be Men of excellent Parts, Temper, and Principles, yet in the heat of their Blood, and Pride of their Fortunes, are apt to be byass'd a little towards Extravagance, and not to consult the severity of Reason, or the exactness of Justice on many occasions

sions, especially in matters relating to their Pleasures.

What therefore is so common and obvious in the World, can't be unnatural upon the Stage, but by using it improperly. To put a Gentleman upon the Office of a Villain or a Scoundrel, or to make a Man of Sense a Bubble or a Cully in the Conclusion, is an abuse to the Character, and a trespass against the Laws of the *Drama*. If therefore the Poet employs any of this Character, he is obliged to give him Success, notwithstanding the blemishes of his Character. For, with all his Faults, he is the best, as well as the most considerable Person, that 'tis lawful for him to make bold with. And if he is at last brought to a Sense of his Extravagance and Errours, and a resolution of amendment, the Poet has exerted his Authority to the utmost extent of his Commission; and the Laws of Comedy exact no more.

Had Mr *Collier* known and consider'd sufficiently the nature of Comedy, I am apt to think, that we had never seen his whole fourth Chapter, which runs altogether upon this mistake

Mr Col-  
lier's mis-  
take con-  
cerning the  
Nature of  
Comedy

stake



stake, *That no Liberties are to be indulg'd in Comedy, and that the principal Characters ought to be in all respects exemplary, and without Blemish.* That this a mistake I hope is very plain from what has been already said. But because Mr *Collier* has taken the pains to back, and assert this erroneous Opinion with a tedious Harangue, and some seemingly plausible Arguments, it may not be amiss to abstract one from t'other, and consider the latter distinctly, without amusing our selves about his Pompous expressions, and Formal Rhetorick.

*Heads of  
Mr Col-  
lier's  
charge a-  
gainst En-  
glish Co-  
edy.*

The whole Summ of Mr *Collier's* long extravagant charge against the *English* Poets, especially the present *Comick* Poets, against whom this Chapter seems to be particularly levelled, may be reduced to these two heads.

1st. That by making their Protagonists, or chief Persons Licentious or debauched they encourage Vice, and Irreligion, and discourage Virtue.

2dly. That the rich Citizens are often represented as Misers and Cuckolds; and the Universities as Schools of Pedantry; and thereby Learning, Industry and Frugality ridiculed.

Mr

Mr *Collier*, whose business all thro his Book is Invective, not Argument, lays himself forth with all the Pomp of Formal Eloquence, and vehemence of Expression, that he is able, to aggravate the crime, and amplify the guilt of the Poets not to prove it. He is more solicitous to possess his Reader, than convince him, and for that reason lets slip the circumstance of proof as not very material, because he found it wou'd tye him up to strict Argument, and close Reasoning, which is not for his purpose, and insists upon the General charge of Debauchery and Impiety; which allowing him all the Liberties of Declamation and Harangue, give him ample Field-room to publish, and display his Parts, and his Malice together; which he does most egregiously, and Flourishes most triumphantly. Never did learned Recorder insult poor *Culprit* in more formidable Oratory, than he does the Poets.

'Tis true, he offers several instances in confirmation of his Assertion, which he draws from divers of our *English* Comedies, which, with the untoward gloss he puts upon

upon 'em, seem to favour his malicious purpose. These I shall consider in their proper places, as far as is absolutely requisite to our purpose, and leave the farther justification of 'em to the Gentlemen more immediately concerned, who I suppose will not be wanting to their own necessary defence.

*His first  
Article exam-  
ined.*

We shall therefore proceed to the examination of the main Branch of his accusation, contained in the first Article, which is *the neglect of Poetick Justice, the encouraging of Vice with Success, and the Discouraging of Virtue.*


The whole weight of this Objection turns upon this hinge, that the *Protagonists*, or chief Persons in *Comedy* are generally vicious and successful, which he pretends to be against the Law\* of *Comedy*, which is to reward Virtue and punish Vice. This objection, as he observes, was started by Mr *Dryden* against himself in his *preface* to his *Mock-Astrologer*. But he objects against the answer, which Mr *Dryden* there makes to it. *That he knows no such Law constantly observed in Comedy, either by the Antients or Moderns.*

This

This Mr Collier calls a lame Defence, <sup>This Rule</sup> and I agree with him, tho we go upon <sup>repugnant</sup> different grounds. For I think Mr Dry- <sup>to the Na-</sup>den has clogg'd his answer with an <sup>ture of</sup> unnecessary restriction, and by the over <sup>Comedy</sup> Modesty of it weakned the sufficiency of it. I grant, that the neglect, or contempt of a Law, does by no means destroy the Authority of it. But I shall carry it something farther, and say that no such Law ever was at all observ'd, or so much as prescrib'd to *Comedy*. Nor do I herein trust to the Strength of my own Memory, or presume upon the extraordinary reach and extent of my Enquiries. But I draw this Conclusion from the nature of *Comedy* itself, which will admit of no such Rule in the latitude Mr Dryden proposes, and Mr Collier maintains it.

*Comedy*, which deals altogether in ri- <sup>Reasoning</sup>dicule, can take no cognizance of, and give no correction to those Vices and Immoralities which it cannot expose on that side. For this reason, the Sallies of Youth, and the Licentiousness of men of Sense and Fortune, uniefs they be such as bring their understandings into question, and make 'em ridiculous, how

R ever





ever unjustifiable, immoral, and offensive they may be to sober people, escape the censure of *Comedy*, because they can't be tried in her way.

*Indulgence  
of Plau-  
tus and  
Terence  
to vicious  
young Peo-  
ple may be  
placed by  
Mr Col-  
lier.*

P. 149.

This Consideration it was, that induc'd *Terence* and *Plautus* to indulge their Young Men so far as they did, and afford so many instances of Favour to vicious young people, as Mr *Collier* allows they did. He is mistaken, when he fancies, *that because those Poets had a greater compass of Liberty in their Religion, and that Debauchery did not lie under those discouragements of Penalty and Scandal with them, as it does with us*; therefore their Poets indulg'd themselves in those Liberties, which otherwise they durst not have taken. *Plautus* and *Terence*, especially the latter, were nice Observers of Mankind, and greater Masters of their own Art, than to take an Improper Liberty, only because 'twas not dangerous. But their Religion, false as it was, and the Laws of their Country, which were very severe at *Rome* in this case, requir'd strict Morality, and Regularity of Life. If therefore they had suspected, that these Indulgences had tended any ways to the

Debauch-

Debauching of their Youth, and the Corrupting of their Manners, they durst not have ventur'd 'em into publick view. Nor wou'd their Magistrates, to whose Censure they were particularly submitted, have suffer'd examples of such ill consequence to have been produc'd openly. Besides, *Cato*, whose Virtue was as sowe and austere, and perhaps as great as Mr *Collier's*, was a great encourager of 'em, which 'tis not probable he wou'd have been, had he smelt any such dangerous Plot in 'em. So that the Authority of these *Precedents* may stand, and be of service, notwithstanding the wide difference betwixt *Heathenism*, and *Christianity*, and Mr *Collier's* Opinion to the contrary.

But *Plautus* and *Terence* have taken Plautus and Terence faithful Copyers from Nature. no such unjustifiable liberties, as he imagines. They have copyed faithfully from Nature, and their Draughts come incomparably near the Life. No outrage is done to the Original, by enlarging or contracting the Features, in order to entertain the Audience with Monsters or Dwarfs, but Humane Life is depicted in its true and just Proportion. If therefore the Images, which

R 2

their

their Plays reflect, displease any froward *Cynic*, the Fault is in the Face, not the Glass which gives a true representation ; and he quarrels with Providence, whose Creature Mankind is, if he dislikes the sight. Any liberties therefore, which these Poets have taken, wherein Nature is not wrong'd, descend undoubtedly to all those that succeed 'em upon the *Comick Stage*, who have a right to all the Priviledges of their Predecessors upon the same terms.

But *Plautus* and *Terence* made their young fellows, as Nature frequently does, wild and extravagant ; at which *Mr Collier* is scandaliz'd , and appeals from their Judgment to

Opinion of  
Horace  
enquir'd in-  
to.  
P. 149.

*Horace, who (he says) was as good a Judge of the Stage, as either of those Comedians, yet seems to be of another opinion.* Let us see how far the Precept of *Horace* for the drawing of youth in general differs from the Practice of those *Comedians*. *Horace* tells us, that the young *Squire*, as soon as he has shaken off the yolk of a Tutor, is for Dogs and Horses, (and Whores too, as appears by the sequel of his Character) that he is

*Cereus*

*Cereus in vitium flecti, monitoribus asper* Art. Poet.  
*Utilium tardus Provisor, prodigus eris,*  
*Sublimis, cupidusque, & amata relinquere*  
*pernix.*

*Prone to Vice, Impatient of Reproof,*  
*Careless of things necessary, Prodigal,*  
*Proud, Eager, and Inconstant in his De-*  
*sires.*

This is not a bare character, a simple This not a  
bare Char-  
acter but  
a Rule. description of the humours of young people ; but 'tis a Precept, a Rule for Artists to draw 'em by. And therefore ought to include nothing contingent, or unnecessary ; but every thing contain'd in it ought to be the inseparable Adjunct of the Species, such as a true Idea of the Generality cannot be given without, tho perhaps some Individuals may be met with, that want it. Upon this rule let Mr Collier arraign these Authors if he can. For tho they wrote before *Horace*, and consequently can't plead his Precept in their defence, yet the observation of Nature was common to them with him, and the reason of the rule as well known to 'em. I suppose therefore, if *Horace* be made their Judge in this case, they must be acquitted, otherwise he will condemn himself.



P. 149.

But Mr Collier tells you, that Horace condemns the obscenities of Plautus, and tells you that Men of Fortune and Quality, in his time, wou'd not endure immodest Satire.

Sense of  
Horace in  
this place  
is taken, or  
perverted  
by Mr Col-  
lier.

This I believe is a discovery of Mr Collier's own, for I don't find any such accusation in Horace; he tells us, that he did by no means admire the Versification and Raillery of Plautus, as their Ancestors had injudiciously done, that his Numbers were not true, nor his Wit Gentle.

*At nostri Proavi Plantinos, & numeros, &  
Laudavere Sales; nimium patienter utrumque,*

*(Ne dicam Stultè) mirati: si modo ego,  
& vos*

*Scimus inurbanum, lepido seponere dicto,  
Legitimumq; sonum digitis callemus, &  
arte.*

Here he excepts against the Numbers, and Raillery of *Plautus*, and arraigns the Taste, and Judgment of their Ancestors, that approved 'em. But I don't find that he lays Immodesty, or Obscenity to his charge.

But

But this seems to be a strain in emulation of his famous Predecessor Mr *Prynne*, whose Arguments and way of Reasoning Mr *Collier* inherits as well as quarrel, with a double portion of his Spirit. Mr *Prynne* was offended at the appearance of *Actresses* upon the Stage, and in the Fervour of his Zeal finds it forbidden in Scripture; *Because*, says he, *St Paul expressly prohibits Women from speaking publickly in the Church.* Mr *Collier* in a fit of Criticism something like this, takes occasion from this Passage of *Horace*, to shew how apt a Scholar he is; and not to be behind hand with Mr *Prynne*, for a Reason, has recourse to his usual method of construction, (in which we have already seen he has a singular dexterity) and converts *Horace's* charge of inharmonious Verse and Clownish Jest, to *Obscenity* and *Immodest Satyr*.

To cover this piece of Legerdemain, he contounds this Passage with another as little to his purpose. *Horace* from talking of *Tragedy* proceeds to lay down some Maxims for the better regulation of the *Satyræ*, then in use upon the *Roman* Stage. These *Satyræ* were a sort

Parity of  
reasoning  
between Mr  
Prynne and  
Mr Collier:

Another  
outrage to  
Horace.

of Interludes introduced betwixt the Acts in Tragedy to refresh, and divert the Audience. The Persons represented were the *Satyri* or *Fauni*, or train of *Bacchus* or *Pan*; Persons supposed to be of very loose and virulent Tongues, and Rustick Behaviour. And accordingly the matter of these Poems was generally scandal, and Clownish raillery, in which to gain the applause of the Mob, they often took such sawcy Liberties in point of Scandal and Undecency, that the People of better Quality were offended at 'em. And *Horace* assures us, that the Quality and Mob cou'd never agree in their Verdict about 'em.

Art. Pect. *Sylvæ deducti caveant (me Judice) Fauni,  
Ne, velut innati triviis, ac pene forenses,  
Aut nimium teneris juvenenter versibus un-  
quam,  
Aut immunda crepent, ignominiosaque dicta  
Offenduntur enim, quibus est Equus, &  
Pater, & res :  
Nec, siquid fricti ciceris probat, & nucis  
emptor,  
Æquis accipiunt animis, donantve corona.*

But

But what's all this to *Plautus* and *Comedy*, who never had any Dealings with these *Satyræ*.

After this notable exploit, he launches out into the wide Sea of Poetry, and flourishes with the Character that *Horace* gives of the first Poets, *Orpheus*, *Amphion*, &c, whom he celebrates as the civiliziers of Mankind; but as that affords little matter either of Honour or Reproach to these, that came so long after them, when the Muses, tho they might have kept their Virtue, yet had lost very much of their Power, and instead of commanding the Passions of their Auditors, were forced on many occasions to comply with and submit to their Whimsies, and humour their capricious Appetites: It will be impertinent (whatever licence Mr *Collier* may assume) to insist any longer upon a case no way Paralell. For this Character, which *Horace* bestows upon those Poets, was intended as a complement to Poetry in general, but not to reflect any honour upon the *Drama* in particular, (much less *Comedy*, the more recent branch of it) which was not invented till long after the time of *Orpheus* and *Amphion*.

His



Use of a  
Chorus  
according  
to Horace.

His next use that he makes of the Authority of Horace, he draws from his Instructions about the Office of the Chorus. The Chorus (Horace tells us after Aristotle) ought to bear the part of an Actor, and take care to say nothing incoherent, or incongruous to the main design, but to make his Song of a piece with the whole. From hence (Mr Collier infers that) 'tis plain, that Horace wou'd have no immoral Character have either Countenance or good Fortune upon the Stage.

Objection.

But here he foresees an Objection, that the Chorus was left off in Comedy before Horace's time, and that these directions must needs therefore be intended for Tragedy. To which

Mr Collier's answer.

He answers, that the Consequence is not good. For the use of the Chorus is not inconsistent with Comedy. The Antient Comedians had it. Aristophanes is an Instance. I know 'tis said the Chorus was left out, in that which they call New Comedy.

Reply to Mr Collier's answer.

Had Mr Collier consider'd who 'twas that said this, he ought to have acquiesc'd in his Authority; but since he is so unwilling to confess, he must be convicted, and therefore we shall endeavour

deavour to prove the validity of the consequence upon him. I shall trouble the Reader with the Depositions of but one Evidence, but he shall be, like Conscience in this case, *Mille Testes*. Horace tells us, that the Old Comedy grew so intolerably abusive and scandalous, that a Law was made to curb it, and that from that time the Chorus was silenc'd.

*Successit vetus his Comædia, non sine multâ* Art. Poet.  
*Laude, sed in vitium libertas excidit, &*  
*vim*  
*Dignam lege regi. Lex est accepta, Cho-*  
*rusque*  
*Turpiter obticuit, sublato jure nocendi.*

This testimony of Horace is full against Mr Collier, and a plain argument that he never intended his directions for a Chorus for the use of Comedy. The Chorus in the Old Comedy had the greatest freedom of Speech, and took the boldest liberties of any part of the Play, and consequently gave the greatest offence, and stood most in need of Correction. And Horace seems to insinuate, that the Chorus was not only scandalously offensive, but that it was express-

pressly silenc'd by Law, when he says,

—*Lex est accepta, Chorusque Turpiter obtinuit, sublato jure nocendi.*

As if the whole Business of the *Chorus* in *Comedy* had been Scandal, and the Law levell'd against the *Chorus* only. The event justifies this Exposition; For after the Publication of the Laws against the Liberty of Scandal, which was grown so rampant in the *Old Comedy*, the *Chorus* vanish'd, and appear'd no more upon the *Athenian Stage* in *Comedy*, that we know of.

Plutus of  
Aristo-  
phanes  
P. 150.

This Mr *Collier* denies, and fortifies himself and his Assertion with matter of Fact. For *Aristophanes his Plutus is New Comedy with a Chorus in't.*

Double mi-  
stake of Mr  
Collier.

In this Assertion there are two mistakes, which being Critical ones, I don't much wonder at, because they contribute towards making the Book Uniform, and preserve the Integrity of the Piece. Yet he building with so much assurance upon 'em, 'twill be but Charity to let him see, that his Foundation is too weak to support the weight of the superstructure he has laid upon it.

The

The first of these is, that the *Plutus* of *Aristophanes* is not *New Comedy*.

2dly. That in the *Plutus*, there is no *Chorus*.

The Learned (whom I suppose Mr *Collier* means by *they*) divide the *Greek* <sup>*Tripartite Division of the Greek*</sup> *Comedy* into three *Classes*, the *Old*, the *Middle*, and the *New*; not to mention that the *Old Comedy* it self is subdivided into two *Ages*; the latter of which commences with *Cratinus*, who first distinguisht the *Parts*, disposd the *Acts*, and fixt the number of *Actors*; and comprehends *Eupolis*, *Aristophanes*, and the rest of the *Comick Poets* till the conclusion of the *Popular Authority*, and the beginning of the *Oligarehy*, from which time to the time of *Alexander*, that which is now called the *Middle Comedy* flourished, till *Menander*, and the *Poets* of his time, *Philemon*, *Diphilus*, *Apollodorus*, and others, quite altered the *Face* of the *Comick Stage*, and introduc'd that which is now call'd the *New Comedy*.

By this *Division*, which is both just, <sup>*By this the*</sup> and accurate, the *Plutus* falls to the <sup>*Plutus*</sup> share of the *Old Comedy*; to which, <sup>*Old Comedy*</sup> notwithstanding the deviations therein from



from the former Practice of *Aristophanes*, it does most properly belong. But if Mr *Collier* will have the *Plutus* of *Aristophanes* to be the first step towards the Reformation of *Comedy* at *Athens*, I shall not much dispute the matter with him. Because he has in that abridged himself of much of that Liberty, which he has used in his former Plays. But granting even this, *Aristophanes* can at most but lead up the Van of the *Middle Comedy*; and is very far distanc'd by the *New*.

Fable of  
Old *Comedy*  
of what  
kind.

For tho *Aristophanes* has in some measure altered his Conduct in his *Plutus*, yet he retains absolutely the Form and stamp of the *Old Comedy*, and retrenches only some offensive Liberties. The Fable of the old *Comedy* was altogether Chimerical, and the Characters Romantick and Whimsical, neither of 'em drawn from the Observation of Nature, or the business of Humane Life, but pumpt out of the extravagance of the *Poets* Brain. The Spirit of these Entertainments consisted in the Piquancy of the Raillery and Jest, and the boldness of the Scandal, in which they took excessive Liberties

ties with particular Persons, especially the *Chorus*, and to which the success of 'em was wholly owing. *Cratinus* is said to have been very bold, and to have taxed people freely by their names, without minding the matter, (I had almost said without Fear or Wit) and charged them with all sorts of Crimes, without respect to Persons. *Eupolis* was somewhat more discreet, couching real Crimes and Persons under sham Names, and lashing his Fellow Citizens on the backs of feigned Offenders. *Aristophanes* was frequently no less plain than *Cratinus* in respect to Names, but his Wit was of another sort, less Sullen and Chagrine. He turned all into Jest, and bantered those things, which the others reprehended after a manner more serious and severe.

*Characters of Cratinus, Eupolis, and Aristophanes how differenc'd.*

*Menander* and the *New Comedians* formed their Models after a very different manner. For having particularly Scandal, which had given so much Offence in the *Old Comedy*, they began to furnish themselves from Observation and Experience, rather than Invention, and to employ their Judgments more than their Fancies. They raised the structure

*New Comedy how differing from the Old.*

structure of their Plays upon the Foundations of Nature, and made the Intrigues of the World, and the common Affairs of Life the Subjects of 'em, and the different orders of Mankind. A hard Father, a difficult Master, a wild Son, a crafty Servant, an impudent Pandar, a Mercenary Courtezan, and a Captive Virgin, were the most usual Characters; which being opposite to, and concerned with one another, set the Plot naturally to work, and give occasion to set all the Wheels of the Machine a going.

Plutus  
not New  
Comedy.

This may suffice to give us an Idea of the difference between the *Old Comedy* and the *New*, and to convince us that the *Plutus* of *Aristophanes*, which deals altogether in unaccountable Designs and surprizing Events, and works by Unnatural Machines to a Chimerical, Romantick end, is not *New Comedy*; tho the Poet contrary to his Custom makes use of Feigned Names, and lays aside the *Chorus*. For tho these Innovations be here made in *Comedy*, yet both the matter and the Form (wherein consisted the main difference between the *Old Comedy* and the *New*) remaining

ing still the same with the rest of his Plays, it can by no means be admitted into the *New*, both matter and form of which were different, if not directly opposite to the former. For in the *Old* Satire of the Old Comedy particular. Of the New general. *Comedy* they proceeded from Generals that were Chimerical and false, to argue particulars that were real and true. In the *New* from Particulars that were imaginary and false, they reprehended Generals that were real. The *Old Comick Poets* generally devised some extravagant and unnatural, or at least improbable tale, into which they took occasion to thrust particular Facts and Persons that were real, and well known. The *New* made use of such Intrigues and Persons as were frequent and familiar amongst Mankind, and thereby corrected the common Faults, such as Avarice, Fraud, &c. but copyed neither the Actions, nor Manners of Individuals; and so reflected not particularly upon any One. The first resembled a Limner, that cou'd copy the Features of a Face, but cou'd only draw Individuals like, ye cou'd not design; the latter a true Historical Painter, that aim'd rather at expressing the Manners, and Passions

S of



of Mankind than the countenances. In whose pieces you shou'd not amongst a Thousand meet one Face, that you distinctly knew, yet none but what were natural and significant, and such as you must acknowledge you saw every day. The difference therefore betwixt the *Old Comedy* and the *New* is as great and evident, as betwixt the Paintings of *Raphael Urbin*, or *Michael Angelo*, and those of *Sir Anthony Van-dike*, or *Sir Peter Lely*. I shall not therefore insist upon those lesser differences of *Phrase* and *Metre*, those already given, being sufficient to inform a very indifferent Judge.

*Aristophanes*  
the *Begin-ner* of the  
*Middle Comedy*.

However, as *Aristophanes* has in this Play varied his Conduct in some things from the Practice of the rest of the *Old Comedians*, and of himself in his former Pieces, he seems to challenge the first place in the *Middle Comedy*, which the Learned have found it necessary to distinguish both from the *Old* and the *New*. Because several alterations were made in *Comedy*, of which perhaps the Omission of the *Chorus* was none of the least considerable, yet neither the Model or Design were

were totally changed till the time of *Menander*, and his *Cotemporaries*.

Mr *Collier*'s second mistake in relation <sup>No Chorus</sup> to the *Plutus* of *Aristophanes* is, that it <sup>in the Plu-</sup> has a *Chorus* in't. If he means that there is a part in this Play, which is sustained by a *Person* or *Persons* under the name of *Chorus*, Matter of Fact is directly for him: But if he thinks that there is any such thing as a true *Chorus* in it, it is as plain against him. This matter will easily be decided, if we consider the Nature, and Office of a *Chorus* in the *Old Comedy*.

The *Chorus* in *Comedy*, was a *Person* <sup>Office of the</sup> consisting of divers, either Men or Wo- <sup>Chorus in</sup> men, or both, and assisted in two Ca- <sup>Comedy.</sup> pacities. One as an Actor, or Party concern'd to promote and carry on the main design, and help forward the Action of the Play, which is common to the *Chorus* with the other Actors, and does not distinguish it from 'em. The other, as the *Poet*'s Representative, to make the *Parabases*, or Transitions from the Actors, (with whom only as an Actor the *Chorus* is concern'd) to the *Gods*, or to the *Audience*. To the *Gods*, to invoke their Aid, or celebrate

their Praises, as the occasion suggested. To the *Audience*, to inform 'em of what was suppos'd to pass *extra Scenam* behind the Scenes, to make the Action of the Play entire, or to make reflections on what pass'd upon the Stage for the Instruction of the Audience, and to tax the evil Practices of such Citizens, as were obnoxious to the *Poet*, and the Publick. This was the part by which it at least gave offence, by the disorderly liberties which it took ; and sometimes to acquaint the Audience with the Poet's hopes and fears, his acknowledgments and complaints, which last part of the business of the *Chorus* is answer'd by the *Prologue* among the *Romans*.

*The parts  
Essential to  
a Chorus  
omitted in  
Plutus.*

I shall not trouble the Reader with the *Grammatical* division of the parts of the *Chorus*, (*viz.*) *Ode*, *Antode*, *Strophe*, and *Antistrophe*, &c. which signify nothing to the point before us. But I shall desire the Reader to take notice that in the *Plutus* of *Aristophanes*, this part which alone constitutes the Office, and Business of a *Chorus*, and which only distinguishes it from a common Actor is entirely omitted. The *Chorus*

in this Play appears but as an ordinary Actor, and addresses itself to the other Actors only, comes on, and goes off without once singing or speaking apart from the rest. The *Chorus* therefore, as it is called, in this Play might more properly have been personated by a single man, and called by any other name, since it performs nothing of the Office.

The Observation of this defect of the Essential part of the *Chorus*, made the Learned \* *Julius Scaliger* think, that this Play had been castrated, and that the *Chorus* (which he confesses to be wanting) was not omitted, but taken away since the writing of it. But whether it were, as *Scaliger* suspects, taken out after it was finish'd, or omitted in the writing, is not very material; 'tis plain we have it not, and 'tis very probable that 'twas the Author's own fear of offending, that depriv'd us of it; the want of which caution in his cost *Cratinus* his Life. For had the *Chorus* of the *Plutus* ever been made publick, I see no reason why that, as well as the rest of his *Chori*, should not have been transmitted to us. I would

\*Etiam in  
ejusdem  
Pluto  
Chori de-  
siderantur,  
quod & a-  
libi mone-  
hamus :  
ita tamen  
ut non o-  
missus, sed  
exemptus  
videatur.  
Poetic.  
lib. I. cap.  
viii



advise Mr *Collier* in the next *Greek Play* he cites, to read farther than the List of the Persons of the *Drama*. For 'tis apparently negligence, that has led him into this Errour, and made him think, that because he found a *Chorus* there, it must needs be in the Play, which he would not have allow'd to be a legitimate *Chorus*, had he read the Play, and known the business of a *Chorus*. 'Tis yet in his Election which excuse shall stand for him.

Mr *Collier's* Instance therefore signifies nothing to his Argument, because it does not prove a *Chorus* consistent with the *New Comedy*.

1st, Because the *Plutus* in which he instances is not *New Comedy*.

2dly, Because (tho it were *New Comedy*) it has no *Chorus*.

So that, I suppose, we may lay the Authority of *Aristophanes* aside in this case.

We shall not trouble the Reader with a particular of the Fables of *Aristophanes*, which are so extravagantly Romanick, that 'tis impossible they should be edifying. And therefore I suppose Mr *Collier* will not play the Morality of  
of

of the Greek Comedy upon us from that Quarter.

But he proceeds to prove the continuance of the *Chorus* in Comedy by an oblique Inference from *Aristotle*, who <sup>Unconclusively  
Inference  
from Ari-  
stotle.</sup> lived after this Revolution of the Stage, (yet) mentions nothing of the omission of <sup>P. 150.</sup> the *Chorus*. But in Mr Collier's opinion, rather supposes the continuance of it, by saying the *Chorus* was added by the Government long after the Invention of Comedy.

Here the Silence of *Aristotle* concerning the omission of the *Chorus* in Comedy, is made an Argument of the Continuance of it; and by an odd sort of Sophistry, he concludes, that because he has taken notice of the first Institution of it, he must needs do the same for the disuse of it, had he been acquainted with it. <sup>Silence of  
Aristotle:  
no argument  
in this Case</sup>

By the same way of arguing he might have prov'd, that *Aristophanes* was the last of the *Comic Poets* before *Aristotle*, because he has made no mention of any that succeeded him; and yet we are sufficiently inform'd, that there were divers between *Aristotle* and *Aristophanes*.

Reason of  
Aristotle's  
silence in  
this point.

But if at this distance we must needs be conjecturing at reasons, for that which pass'd so long ago, a much more natural account may be given of this Silence, than that which Mr Collier strains so hard for. *Aristotle* was a man of extraordinary Capacity and Judgment, and did not talk so impertinently as Mr Collier supposes he would have done, if he had had opportunity. *Aristotle*, in his Treatise of Tragedy, gives a very brief account of the Rise and Progress of the Drama, and as his subject obliged him, tells us, that the two Branches, Tragedy and Comedy, arose both from the same Spring, viz. the Hymns to *Bacchus*, the former from the *Dithyrambi*, which contain'd his Praises and Exploits, the latter from the *τὰ θαλλικά*, a sort of obscene Songs compos'd of the same Deity, which in conformity to the Law were still continued his time in the Villages.

His account  
of the Rise  
of the  
Drama.

Cap. 4.

\* ἡ δὲ ὁμο-  
τῶν τὰ  
θαλλικῶν  
ἔτι καὶ νῦν  
ἐν πολλαῖς  
τῶν πόλε-  
ων διαμέ-  
νει νομιζό-  
μενα.

Progress of  
Comedy

In the next Chapter he proceeds to the Definition of Comedy, in order to illustrate the difference betwixt that and Tragedy; and then informs us, that the first steps towards the reducing Comedy to Form and Order, were made

in

in the dark, and the marks of 'em too far obliterated to be trac'd backwards, through publick neglect, that 'twas long e're it came to be Acted at the Expence of the Publick. For that's the meaning in this place, of the Magistrates giving the *Chorus*, that is paying the *Actors*. For he immediately subjoyns, that all before that time *were Volunteers* in this Service, that is, acted *gratis*.

In this account of the growth of *Brevity of Comedy*, *Aristotle* according to his usual *Aristotle* Method, is very concise, and does not make one step out of his way to gratifie any Curiosity, which he foresaw that some of his Readers might have. But Mr *Collier*, who reasons after a manner very different from the Philosopher, wou'd lead him a Wild Goose Chase quite out of his road, to tell when the *Chorus* in *Comedy* was silenc'd, tho' twas nothing to his purpose, and a long way from his Text; or force him to confess against his Conscience that he knows nothing of the matter. But *Aristotle*, who was a better Judge than Mr *Collier* of what was proper and necessary to his subject, reserves this point to another



Cap. 4.

ther occasion, and in the preceding Chapter reprimands the unseasonable Curiosity and Impatience of those, that require decisions out of Time and Order. Which had Mr *Collier* carefully read, this Argument probably had been suppress'd.

A parti-  
cular Trea-  
tise of Co-  
medy writ-  
ten by Ari-  
stotle, but  
lost.

However, to oblige him with a little scratching where it itches, I must desire him to take notice, that at that time *Aristotle* had actually written, or design'd at least to write another Book concerning *Comedy* in particular, and therefore prudently forbore to use those Materials here, which he knew would be more serviceable in another place. This Book has been long lost, and therefore there lies no Appeal to it on this occasion. Yet because he has such a mind to make *Aristophanes* the Father of the *New Comedy*, we'll stretch a point farther than we are bound by the Laws of *Polemicks*; and to shew that we are fair Adversaries, point him out a Play, that may perhaps serve his turn somewhat better than the *Plutus*. The *Cocalus*, one of the last Plays of *Aristophanes*, which is lost, is said by some learned men to have been the Model, which

which *Menander* copyed exactly, and took his design of the *New Comedy* from. If this be true, *Aristophanes* may in some sense claim the *New Comedy* as his Issue. But then Mr *Collier* must not say a word more of the *Chorus*. For 'tis certain that *Menander* used none; and very probable, that the *Cocalus* had none neither, if that were his Model.

By this it may appear, that whether *Chorus* a *Chorus* be consistent with *New Comedy* not used in the New Comedy or not, it was not used in it by the *Antients*. Nor was it indeed fit to be used according to the liberties of *Aristophanes*. And we may conclude from the practice of all Ages and Nations ever since, that they thought those Freedoms essential to the *Chorus* of *Comedy*, when they chose rather to lay it wholly aside than to reform it. If *Moliere* has, after two thousand years discontinuance, ventur'd to bring a *Chorus* again upon the *Comick Stage*, I don't find that his performances of that kind have any extraordinary effect, or that they stir up many Imitators to follow his Example. *Moliere* was arrived at the second Infancy of his *Poetry*, and might want those

those helps to keep his Plays upon their Legs, which by the first *Comick Poets* were made use of to teach theirs to go upright. His more vigorous productions scorn'd those Crutches, which the Issue of his old Age, that brings the Infirmities of its Parent along with it into the world, is forc'd to have recourse to for its support.

Chorus  
altogether  
improper  
for the Com-  
ick Stage  
in En-  
gland.

But to what end would Mr *Collier* introduce the *Chorus* into the *English Comedy*? We have no *Hymns*, no *Anthems* to be sung upon the *Stage*; nor no *Music*, or *Dancing*, but what is as well or better perform'd by the ordinary Method now in use, than it could be by a *Chorus*. The main business of a *Chorus* is cut off by our Religion, and the rest render'd useless and unnecessary, by the method and disposition of our *Comedies*. Something like it we have still in use, tho not in our *Theatres*, yet at our *Puppet Shews*; where *Chorus* stands before the *Scenes*, and explains to the Spectators what they see, and informs 'em what shall happen afterwards, makes his Wise reflections on what is past, and sometimes enters into Dialogue with his little *Actors*, as a Party concern'd,

Used at  
Puppet  
Shews.

concern'd, and talks to the purpose like one of them. This is exactly the Office of a *Chorus*, and therefore I don't see why the fellow that discharges it mayn't wear the Title; except it be, that the Authors of that sort of *Drama*, are generally too illiterate to know from whence they originally fetcht their Precedent. Here is nothing of the duty of a *Chorus* omitted, except the *Singing, Dancing, and Idolatrous Part*, which, as we have already observ'd, are all either better supply'd otherwise, or absolutely inconsistent with our Religion and Stage.

Mr *Collier* indeed seems to assign the *Function* *Chorus* another Office. He wou'd have <sup>assigned the</sup> it to be a sort of *Monitor*, or *Chaplain* <sup>Chorus</sup> <sup>by Mr Col-</sup> to the Play, to preach to the Audience, <sup>lier.</sup> and correct the Disorders of the Stage. This is a new Function, for which I doubt he can produce no warrant from *Aristophanes*, or Precedent from *Moliere*. 'Tis an Office of his own creating, and therefore he wou'd do well to execute it a while himself, to instruct the *Players*, and teach 'em the knack of Preaching, in which they are yet unexercis'd.

But



Original  
Error of  
Mr Collier.

But all this Torrent of Misreasoning and false Rhetorick flows from one Spring, one Original Error has branch'd itself out thus amply. Mr Collier knows, that *the business of Comedy is to instruct by example*; and he mistakenly imagines, that these ought to be Examples for Imitation. Whereas, if he considers the nature of *Comedy*, he will find just the reverse of this fancy to be true. For, as we have already taken notice, it can employ no perfectly upright Characters, and consequently can afford no Examples, but for Caution.

Loose Characters in  
Comedy no  
Encouragement to Debauchery.

Nor is *Comedy* therefore to be thought imperfect, any more than the Law, which makes no other provision for the encouragement of Virtue and good Actions, than by punishing Vice and Villany. What Mr Collier objects in this case is groundless, that the Poets, by dressing up an imperfect, or debauch'd Character, with the embellishments of Wit and Sense, and other good Qualities, and crowning it with Success at last, pave the way to Licentiousness and Debauchery. For, whether the Poet brings such a Character to a solemn Resolution of Reforming at last,

last, or not, which yet they generally do, 'tis evident, that the success which attends it, is not given to the Licentiousness, but to the Wit and Sense, or other good Qualities, which are predominant in the Character. He therefore that can take Success so bestow'd, and circumstantiated as it is usually in *Comedy*, for an encouragement to Debauchery must have a very deprav'd Apprehension.

But Mr *Collier* is implacably enrag'd at the *Poets*, for mixing such Beauties and such Blemishes in one Piece ; and is in a Pannick Fear, lest the Beauty of the whole shou'd tempt Folks to ape the Deformities of it. This is as ridiculous an Apprehension, as if any awkward Fellow shou'd see a *Beau* in all his Glory with dirty Shoes, and shou'd fancy that he made that splendid Figure purely by virtue of the dirt upon his Shoes, and resolve never to have his own clean'd again. A fine Face, with a cast of the Eyes, may move the *Beau's* and the Ladies to wish for such Features, and such a Complexion, yet it wou'd scarce win 'em to endeavour to squint like it. Whatever Mr *Collier* may

*Ridiculous  
Fear if Mr  
Collier.*

may think, the Understanding of our Youth is not so very depress'd and low, but they can very readily distinguish between the obvious Beauties, and Defects of a Character, and are not to be fool'd like *Dottrels* into a vicious Imitation. If a Man shou'd know a *Pick-pocket* that was an excellent *Accountant*, or a *Forger* of false Notes that was an incomparable *Writing-master*, it were very easie, and very commendable, for any one to imitate their good Qualities, without receiving any taint or impression from their Rogueries.

*Timares*  
*wrongfully*  
*accus'd by*  
*him.*

However, Mr *Collier* observes abundance of Licentiousness and Impurity in the world, and is resolv'd to lay it all at the doors of the Theatres. He sees up and down a great number of figures like those that are expos'd upon the Stage, and he wisely concludes, that the Models must needs be taken from thence, and that these men are but the Players apes, which is directly contrary to the Truth. For these are the Originals, of which those upon the Stage are but the Copies, the Images, which that, like a Glass, reflects back upon 'em

*Chorus*, or no *Chorus*, Mr *Collier* <sup>Sense of</sup> pushes still forward upon the mistaken, <sup>Horace a-</sup> Authority of *Horace* ; and maintains <sup>gain per-</sup> that *Horace* having expressly mentioned <sup>verted.</sup> the Beginning and Progress of Comedy, discovers himself more fully. He advises a Poet to form his work upon the Precepts of Socrates and Plato, and the Models of P. 151 Moral Philosophy. This was the way to preserve Decency, and to assign a proper Fate and Behaviour to every Character. Now if *Horace* would have his Poet govern'd by the Maxims of Morality, he must oblige him to Sobriety of Conduct, and a just Distribution of Rewards and Punishments.

To try the validity of this Argument, we must have recourse to the Original, which will shew us some misapplication, and some mistake of *Horace's* meaning in this short Paragraph. Mr *Collier* links this advice of *Horace* immediately to his account of the Rise and Progress of Comedy ; and that he may appropriate it solely to Comedy, skips over a transition of twenty lines, by which the Poet artificially passes from the particular of Comedy to Poetry in general ;



general ; and takes occasion to say, that a good Poet ought to be a wise Man, and acquainted with the Writings of the Philosophers. For Socrates appears in this place as the Representative of the whole Body of Moral Philosophers, and not for himself and Plato only, as Mr Collier imagines.

H. in. Arg.  
Poet.

*Scribendi recte sapere est Principium & Fons.*

*Rem tibi Socraticæ poterunt ostendere chartæ.*

The reason of this he immediately subjoyns, which will also make the application for us. For, says he, The man that knows what is due to his Country, and his Friends, his obligations to Parents and Kindred, the Laws of Hospitality, and the duty of a Senator, a Judge, and a General, knows enough to enable him to do Justice to every Character.

Ibid.

*Qui didicit Patriæ quid debeat, & quid amicis :*

*Quo sit amore Parens, quo Frater amandus & Hospes,  
Quod*

*Quod sit Conscripti, quod Judicis officium, quæ  
Partes in bellum missi ducis : ille profecto  
Reddere personæ scit convenientia cuiq;*

This List of Qualifications seems prepar'd only for *Tragick* and *Epick* Poetry. *Comedy*, which concerns none but the lesser Intrigues of Mankind, and the private Affairs of particular Families, or Persons, has no dealings with the Publick, or its Magistrates; and therefore does not seem to be comprehended in the aim of these directions.

Yet, if Mr *Collier* will have it included, he ought to have shewn how far it was affected in particular upon a fair exposition. But that method would not serve his turn. For *Horace* in this passage, does not advise the Study of *Morality*, but *Politicks*, which could best satisfy demands of this nature. He did not expect that the *Poets* shou'd tye their *Characters* up to severe duty, and make every one act up to the strict Rules of *Morality*, and be guided by the dictates of right Reason and Justice, or otherwise to punish 'em always in

*This A-  
vice Poli-  
tical, not  
Moral.*

proportion to the Deviations they made from 'em, as Mr *Collier* insinuates. All that he requir'd was, that a Poet shou'd know how it became the several orders of men to behave themselves in civil Societies, according to their respective Ranks, Degrees, and Qualities; that they might thereby be qualify'd to give distinct Images of every kind, whether good or bad, without mixing of Characters, or confounding Ideas. *Rectum est Index sui, & obliqui*, was his Rule in this case, and 'tis a true one, a right notion of things will certainly discover a false one. For this he advis'd his Poet, to consult the *Philosophers*, and to dive into the political Reasons of these matters, without which their view of 'em wou'd be but superficial and confus'd.

Yet after all he gave him very large Priviledges, and extended his Charter, as far as the observation of Humane Nature, he allow'd him the liberty of saying any thing that Providence laid before him, provided he kept close to the Original. To this end he bids him *look upon the Examples that men set him in their Lives and Manners, and*  
*thence*

thence learn to draw true pictures of Mankind.

*Respicere exemplar vitæ, morumq; ju-  
bebo.*

*Doctum Imitatorem, & veras hinc du-  
cere voces.*

The Mores, or Manners here menti-  
oned by Horace, are the Poetical, not Manners! here signi-  
ed Poetical  
not Moral  
Moral, the distinction betwixt which  
Mr Collier very well knows, as appears  
by his making use of it, when 'tis for  
his turn, tho he wilfully over-looks it  
in many other places, where the notice  
of it would be more natural, but less  
for his malicious purpose. However,  
since he has given a sort of definition,  
tho an imperfect one, of Poetical Man-  
ners, I shall give it the Reader in his  
own words. And because 'tis the only  
Statute Law of Parnassus, by which the  
Poets can fairly be tried for any mis-  
demeanour, either of Character or Ex-  
pression, I shall supply the Defects of  
Mr Collier's report of it from Aristotle,  
who is more full and clear.

Manners, in the Language of Poetry, Mr Col-  
is a propriety of Actions and Persons. lier's de-  
scription of  
Poetical  
Manners  
To succeed in this business there must be



P. 165.

*a regard had to Age, Sex, and Condition: And nothing put into the mouths of Persons, which disagrees with any of these circumstances. 'Tis not enough to say a witty thing, unless it be spoken by a likely Person, and upon a proper occasion.*

Deficient  
and Equivocal.

In this account I observe many things deficient, something equivocal, which I shall first take notice of, and then proceed to supply the Defects. The three things, Mr Collier recommends to a Poet's, or Reader's careful observation, and regard, are *Age, Sex, and Condition*. Of these, the first and the last, *Age and Condition*, are equivocal terms. The Author has not taken care to explain, whether he means by *Age*, the Age of a Person, or the Age of the World, which he is suppos'd to live in. For to both these great regard is to be had, because they difference the Characters equally. A noble Roman of four and twenty in the first Ages of the Commonwealth, was no more like one of the same Age under the Emperors; in humour and inclinations, than either of 'em was like his Grandfather of Fourscore. As great, or greater is the Ambiguity of the word *Condition*, whereby

whereby he has not signify'd whether he means Condition, as to *Estate, Quality, Understanding, or Circumstances, as to the Action of the Play, at the juncture when the person does or says any thing.* Yet these have all an equal share in the propriety both of Words and Actions, and ought to be consider'd, otherwise the Manners can never be preserv'd in their Propriety and Integrity. But by supplying the Defects of this Account, we shall remedy the danger of mistakes from the equivocal Expressions contained in it.

*Aristotle* requires four conditions to the perfection of *Poetick Manners*. Aristotle's description.

1<sup>st</sup>, *That they be good.* \* ΕΞΗ ΔΕ

By the *Goodness* of *Manners* the Philosopher does not here understand any *Moral Goodness*; for he declares in this very Article, that he means only \* that they should be expressive of the Character, and carry both in words and actions, the distinguishing marks of the Humour and Inclinations of the person, whether they be *morally* Good or Bad. ἢ ὅτι μὴ, ἢ ἀπὸ περὶ ἐλέχθην, ποιεῖν ὁ χαρακτὴρ, ἢ πρὸς τὰς πράξεις, σὺν τῷ φωνῶν, ἢ φιλίᾳ, ἢ χερσὶν δὲ ἢ χερσίν.

Manners are good, according to *Aristotle*, let 'em be never so vicious. *Horace* understands *Manners* the same way, when he tells us, that sometimes Plays of little Elegance, without Ornament, or Art, yet wherein the Manners were well express'd, took better than others, wherein they were neglected for Tinsel and Bombast.

Hor. Art.  
Poet.

*Interdum speciosa locis, morataq; recte  
Fabula, nullius Veneris sine pondere &  
Arte  
Valdius oblectat Populum, meliusq; moratur,  
Quam versus inopes rerum, Nugaeq; canore*

τα ἀρ-  
μότλοντα.

Propriety  
of Manners  
requir'd.

2dly, \* That they be proper.

Wherein this propriety consists *Aristotle* has not told us, except in one Negative Instance, that *Courage* is a Quality improper, or unbecoming a Woman. Mr *Collier's* account of Poetical Manners above-cited, relates to this particular Condition only, yet is both defective and equivocal in that. *Horace* has been very full upon this, and takes care to describe at large the different humours of man in the several Stages of his Life.

The

The same he does to the several orders and degrees of men, according to their respective Capacities, either Natural or Political, and gives the Poets a great Charge not to confound 'em. To repeat his words upon this occasion wou'd be tedious, upon the score of length. However, I shall endeavour to give the Reader as good an *Idea* of this *Poetical Propriety*, as the narrow compass I am oblig'd to will permit. The propriety of *Manners* consists in an exact conformity both of words and actions to the supposed *Age* both of the person and the world, to the *Humour, Fortune, Quality, Understanding*, and present *Condition*, as to the business of the Play, of the person acting or speaking. *Horace* as well as *Aristotle*, has express'd all this in one word, *Convenientia*, both which I have render'd *Proper*. This place does not afford me room for instances for each particular, and therefore I shall desire the Reader's patience, till the Subject calls for 'em in their proper places.

3dly, *That they be like.*

This Condition relates only to *Cha-* Similar-  
*acters* taken from Histories, or *Poetical* <sup>rude of</sup>  
*Manners*  
 Tra-<sup>where</sup>



Traditions very well known. When the *Poet* makes use of Names, or Stories with which the Audience is well acquainted, he must be sure to make 'em conform to the receiv'd opinion. Otherwise the Audience, who will not endure to have their own Notions contradicted, will never acknowledge 'em to be the Persons they wou'd be taken for. For this reason *Horace* bids his Poet, *Follow common Fame, Famam Sequere.* And if he meddled with known Names, to keep to the known Characters, and Accounts of 'em.

Hor. Art.  
Poet.

— *Honoratum si forte reponis Achillem:  
Impiger, iracundus, inexorabilis, acer:  
Jura neget sibi nata, nihil non arroget  
armis.*

*Sit Medea ferox, invictaq; flebilis Ino,  
Perfidus Ixion, Io vaga, tristis Orestes.*

The likeness here design'd, is not a *Natural*, but a *Historical* likeness. However monstrous a Character were, if it was form'd upon, and adjusted to common *Fame*, the *Poet* was justify'd.

4thly,

4thly, *That they should be equal.*

Here likewise *Aristotle* puts in his *Ca-* Equality  
*veat*, lest any one by *Equality* of *Man-* of Man-  
*ners* shou'd understand such a steadiness ners what.  
 of *Temper* and *Resolution*, as would  
 exclude from the *Stage* the uncertainty  
 of *Fickle Humours*, which he very well  
 knew to be the case of a very great part  
 of mankind. All that he requir'd was,  
 that they should be all of a piece, that  
 there might be no dismembring of *Cha-*  
*acters*, no repugnancy to themselves in  
 any part of 'em. *Horace*, his best Inter-  
 preter, says, *Let the character be main-*  
*tain'd, and let the person appear the same*  
*at his exit, that he did at his entrance,*  
*and be consistent with himself.*

— *Servetur ad imum*

Art. Poet.

*Qualis ab incepto processerit, & sibi*  
*conset.*

The *Philosopher* did by no means  
 intend to cut off so considerable a  
 Branch from the revenue of *Comedy* as  
*Levity*; than which nothing deserves  
 her *Correction* more, nothing fits her  
 purpose better. But he cautions the  
*Poets*, whenever they make use of any  
 of

of these *Unequal*, or *Uncertain* Tem-  
 \* *ὁμαλῶς* pers, to represent 'em \* *equally*, or *alike*,  
*ἀγόμενον* *unequal* thro the whole Piece ; and not  
*δὴν ἕνα* to make 'em Fickle and Inconstant in  
 one Act, and Resolv'd and Steady in  
 another.

Upon these Rules we may proceed to  
 try the *Characters*, and *Expressions* of our  
 Poets, either in conjunction with the  
*Antients*, or separately by themselves.

Faults of  
 Characters  
 what.

The *Characters* and *Expressions* have  
 such a natural dependance upon one  
 another, that they can't be examin'd a-  
 part, each being justifiable or condem-  
 nable upon the Evidence of the other  
 only. The *Character* may offend two  
 ways ; *first*, by being unnatural, and  
 consequently Monstrous ; *2dly*, by be-  
 ing Inconsistent with itself, and not all  
 of a Piece. These Faults, when com-  
 mitted, are likewise two ways discove-  
 rable, by the *Actions*, and by the *Ex-  
 pressions*, when any thing is done, or  
 said unnatural, or improper, a Fault is  
 committed against *Character*, which is  
 thereby broken, and becomes double.

Faults of  
 Expression  
 manifest.

The Faults of Expression are as va-  
 rious as the circumstances against which  
 it may offend, which are already summ'd

up

up under the head of Propriety, which may again be every one subdivided into so many Branches, that it would be endless to particularize the several ways of trespassing in this kind. I shall therefore content my self to take notice of 'em severally, as occasion shall present it self, and wave any further notice of those which shall not be found to my present purpose.

Mr *Collier* might unquestionably have found our *Poets* remiss enough in the observation of these Rules, and consequently guilty of faults deserving his or any one's correction. But he chose rather to brand 'em with crimes of a blacker dye, tho with less Justice and Truth, and like an *Irish* Evidence, by his forwardness to charge, and the monstrousness of his allegations, destroys the credit of his depositions.

His charge against our *Stage* for the mismanagement of their *Characters* consists of three general heads.

*Some heads  
of Mr Col-  
lier's  
Charge.*

1. *Misrepresentation of Women.*
2. *Abuse of the Clergy.*
3. *Rude treatment of the Nobility.*

To



To all these I shall say something general, with regard to the Argument, without entring into a discussion of the Merits of those particular Instances which he brings to back his Assertions. Not but I think many of 'em easily to be Apologiz'd for, or rather to be justify'd ; but because it would spin out this discourse to an unreasonable length, and likewise because there are those whose Abilities in this dispute are as much greater than mine, as their Interest in it, to whom I leave it.

P. 8, 9, 10.

*The Poets (says Mr Collier) make Women speak smuttily. They bring 'em under such misbehaviour, as is violence to their Native Modesty, and a misrepresentation of their Sex. For Modesty, as Mr Rapin observes, is the Character of Women. They represent their single Ladies, and persons of Condition, under these disorders of Liberty. This makes the Irregularity still more monstrous, and a greater Contradiction to Nature and Probability.*

*This point mistaken.*

Here again, according to his usual method, Mr Collier mistakes his point, and runs away with a wrong scent ; however he opens, and cries it lustily away. that the Musick may atone for the

the mistake, and draw all those that are not stanch in Partners to his Error. Mr *Rapin* observes that the Character of Women is Modesty, and therefore Mr *Collier* thinks, that no Woman must be shewn without it. *Aristotle* has given Courage or Valour as the Characteristick or Mark of distinction proper to the other Sex, which was a notion so Antient, and so universally receiv'd, that most Nations have given it a denomination from the Sex, as if peculiar to it. The Greeks call'd it *Ανδρεια*, we Manhood. Yet 'tis no Solecism in Poetical Manners to represent Men sometimes upon the Stage as Cowards; nor did any man ever think the whole Sex affronted by it; how near soever it might touch some Individuals.

If the Poets set up these Women of Liberty for the Representatives of their whole Sex, or pretended to make them the Standards to measure all the rest by, the Sex wou'd have just reason to complain of so abusive a Misrepresentation. But 'tis just the contrary, the Sex has no Interest in the Virtues or Vices of any Individual, either on the Stage, or off of it; they reflect no honour or disgrace

*Faults of particular no reflection upon the Sex in General.*

grace on the Collective Body, any more than the Neatness and good Breeding of the *Court* affect the Nastiness and ill Manners of *Billingsgate*, or are affected by 'em.

Univer-  
sals and  
Individu-  
als impro-  
per Chara-  
cters.

In Plays the *Characters* are neither *Universal* nor *General*. Marks so comprehensive are the Impresses and Signatures of Nature, which are not to be corrected, or improv'd by us, and therefore not to be meddled with. Besides, they give us no Idea of the person characteriz'd, but what is common to the rest of the species, and do not sufficiently distinguish him. Neither are they so *Singular*, as to extend no farther than single *Individuals*. *Characters* of so narrow a Compass would be of very little use, or diversion. Because they wou'd not appear natural, the Originals being probably unknown to the greatest part, if not the whole Audience; nor cou'd any of the Audience find any thing to correct in themselves by seeing the Infirmary peculiar to a particular man expos'd. This was indeed the method of the *Old Greek Comedy*; but then they pick'd out publick persons, whom they dress'd in Fools Coats and

expos'd upon the Stage, not in their own own Shapes, but those of the Poet's Fancy; an Insolence, that never would have been endur'd in any, but a Popular Government, where the best of Men are sometimes sacrificed to the Humours and Caprices of a giddy multitude. Yet even by them it was at last suppressed.

The *Characters* therefore must neither be too general, nor too singular, one loses the distinction, the other makes it monstrous, we are too familiar with that to take notice of it, and too unacquainted with this to acknowledge it to be real. But betwixt these there is an almost infinite variety; some natural and approaching to Generals, as the several *Ages* of the World, and of *Life*, *Sexes* and *Tempers*; some Artificial, and more particular, as the vast Varieties and Shapes of *Villany*, *Knavery*, *Folly*, *Affectation* and *Humour*, &c. All these are within the Poet's Royalty, and he may summon 'em to attend him, whenever he has occasion for their service. Yet tho' these make up perhaps the greatest part of Mankind, he is not fondly to imagine, that

U

he

What Characters  
pre-



he has any Authority over the whole, or to expect homage from any of 'em, as the Publick Representatives of their Sex.

Two sorts  
of Resem-  
blances in  
Poetry.

Yet even granting to the Poets such an unlimited Authority (which I shall not do) Mr Collier's Argument falls to the Ground nevertheless. For as in *Painting*, so in *Poetry*, 'tis a Maxim as true as common, that there are two sorts of Resemblances, one handsome, 't'other homely. Now *Comedy*, whose Duty 'tis not to flatter, like Droll *Painting*, gives the Features true, tho' the Air be ridiculous. The Sex has its *Characteristick* Blemishes as well as Ornaments; and those are to be copied, when a Defective Character is intended, as the others are for a perfect one. And yet, for the reasons already given, when the Virtues or Vices of any particular Women are represented, the Sex in general have no share either in the Compliment or the Affront. Because any particular Instances to the contrary notwithstanding, the Sex may be in the main either good or bad. So that Mr Collier's charge of misrepresenting the Sex in general is groundless.

But

But he pursues his Argument to particulars, and takes notice, that even Quality it self is not excepted from these Mismanagements.

If Dignities conferr'd true Merit, and Titles took away all Blemishes, the Poets <sup>Quality no just reason for exemption.</sup> were certainly very much in the wrong to represent any Person of Quality with failings about her. But if Birth or Pre-ferment be no sufficient Guard to a weakly Virtue or Understanding. If Title be no security against the usual Humane Infirmities ; I see no reason, why they mayn't as well appear together upon the lesser Stage of the Theatre, as upon the grand one of the World. But this will be more properly consider'd in another place.

From these more general exceptions, <sup>Mr Collier's collection from the Antients very loosely made.</sup> he descends to particular Expressions. Which, that he may render the more inexcusable, he flies out into extravagant Commendations of the Antients upon the score of their Modesty, and the Cleanness of their Expressions. In this employment he bestirs himself notably, and pretends not to leave one exceptionable Passage unremarked. But either he has had a Prodigious Crop, or is a

very ill Husband; for he leaves very large gleanings behind him. We shall make bold to walk over the same ground, and pick up some of his leavings, (for all wou'd be too bulky to find room in this place) and restore 'em to their Owners, whether left by him out of negligence or design.

One thing I must desire the Reader to take notice of, which is, that I don't charge these passages as faults, or immoralities upon the *Antients*, but only instance in 'em, to shew the partiality of Mr *Collier*, who violently wrests the Words and Sense of the Moderns, only to make that monstrous and unsufferable in them, which he either excuses or defends in the others. Nor do I here pretend to present the Reader with a compleat Collection of the kind. I assure him, that I shall leave untouch'd some hundreds of those instances which I have actually observ'd amongst the *Greek* and *Latin Dramatists*, and only give him so many, as are indispensably necessary to shew how unjustly Mr *Collier* has drawn his parallel. For since both *Antients* and *Moderns*, as *Poets* are submitted to, and ought

ought to be govern'd by the same Laws,  
 'tis but reason, that one as well as  
 t'other, shou'd be allow'd the benefit  
 of 'em.

*Shakespear's Ophelia* comes first under <sup>Objection</sup> his Lash, for not keeping her mouth <sup>to Ophelia.</sup> clean, under her distraction. He is so very nice, that her breath, which for so many years has stood the test of the most critical Noses, smells rank to him. It may therefore be worth while to enquire, whether the fault lies in her Mouth, or his Nose.

*Ophelia* was a modest young Virgin, <sup>Character</sup> beloved by *Hamlet*, and in Love with <sup>of Ophelia.</sup> him. Her Passion was approv'd, and directed by her Father, and her Pretensions to a match with *Hamlet*, the heir apparent to the Crown of *Denmark*, encouraged, and supported by the Countenance and Assistance of the *King* and *Queen*. A warrantable Love, so naturally planted in so tender a Breast, so carefully nursed, so artfully manured, and so strongly forced up, must needs take very deep Root, and bear a very great Head. Love, even in the most difficult Circumstances, is the Passion naturally most predominant in young Breasts



but when it is encouraged and cherish'd by those of whom they stand in awe, it grows Masterly, and Tyrannical, and will admit of no Check. This was poor *Ophelia's* case. *Hamlet* had sworn, her *Father* had approved, the *King* and *Queen* consented to, nay, desired the Consummation of her Wishes. Her hopes were full blown, when they were miserably blasted. *Hamlet* by mistake kills her *Father*, and runs mad; or, which is all one to her, counterfeits madness so well, that she is cheated into a belief of the reality of it. Here Piety and Love concur to make her Affliction piercing, and to impress her Sorrow more deep and lasting. To tear up two such passions violently by the roots, must needs make horrible Convulsions in a Mind so tender, and a Sex so weak. These Calamities distract her, and she talks incoherently; at which Mr *Collier* is amaz'd, he is downright stupified, and thinks the Woman's mad to run out of her wits. But tho she talks a little light-headed, and seems to want sleep, I don't find she needed any *Cashew* in her Mouth to correct her Breath. That's a discovery

of Mr *Collier's*, (like some other of his) who perhaps is of Opinion, that the Breath and the Understanding have the same Lodging, and must needs be vitiated together. However, *Shakespear* has drown'd her at last, and Mr *Collier* is angry that he did it no sooner. He is for having Execution done upon her seriously, and in sober sadness, without the excuse of madness for Self-murder. To kill her is not sufficient with him, unless she be damn'd into the bargain. Allowing the Cause of her madness to be *Partie per Pale*, the death of her Father, and the loss of her Love, which is the utmost we can give to the latter, yet her passion is as innocent, and inoffensive in her distraction as before, tho not so reasonable and well govern'd. Mr *Collier* has not told us, what he grounds his hard censure upon, but we may guess, that if he be really so angry as he pretends, 'tis at the mad Song, which *Ophelia* sings to the Queen, which I shall venture to transcribe without fear of offending the modesty of the most chaste Ear.

*Mad Song.*

*To morrow is St Valentine's day, all  
in the morn betimes,  
And I a Maid at your Window to be  
your Valentine.*

*Then up he, he arose, and don'd his  
Cloaths, and dupt the Chamber door,  
Let in a Maid that out a Maid  
Never departed more.*

*By Gis, and by St Charity :  
Alack, and fie for shame !*

*Young men will do't, if they come to't,  
By Cock they are to blame.*

*Quoth she, before you tumbled me,  
You promis'd me to wed :*

*So had I done, by yonder Sun,  
And thou hadst not come to bed.*

*Foolish but  
offensive.*

'Tis strange this stuff shou'd wamble  
so in Mr Collier's Stomach, and put him  
into such an Uproar. 'Tis silly indeed,  
but very harmless and inoffensive ; and  
tis no great Miracle, that a Woman  
out of her Wits shou'd talk Nonsense,  
who at the soundest of her Intellects  
had no extraordinary Talent at Speech-  
making. Sure Mr Collier's concoctive  
Faculty's extreemly deprav'd, that meet  
Water-Pap turns to such virulent Cor-  
ruption with him.

But

But Children and Mad Folks tell Antients  
truth, they say, and he seems to disco-<sup>more faulty</sup>  
ver thro her Frenzy what she wou'd then this.  
be at. She was troubled for the loss of  
a Sweet-heart, and the breaking off her  
Match, Poor Soul. Not unlikely. Yet  
this was no Novelty in the days of our  
Fore-fathers; if he pleases to con-  
sult the Records, he will find even in  
the days of *Sophocles*, Maids had an  
itching the same way, and longed to  
know, what was what, before they  
died.

*Antigone*, whom he has produc'd as <sup>Instance in</sup>  
an instance of the Temperance, and De-<sup>the Anti-</sup>  
cency of the *Ancients* in this respect, <sup>gone of</sup>  
may upon the Parallel serve us as an ex-<sup>Sopho-</sup>  
ample of the contrary. The distinguish-  
ing Parts of this Ladies Character, are  
Piety and Resolution, and she makes  
both sufficiently appear, she buries her  
Brother, tho she knew she must die for  
it. And when she receives her Sentence  
from *Creon*, which was immediate-  
ly to be put in execution, she makes  
light of Death, and insults the Tyrant.  
But as she is led to Execution, she is un-  
expectedly concerned about the Toy her  
Maidenhead; 'tis her great Affliction,  
that



that she must go out of the world with that great Burthen about her. Upon this occasion she is very clamorous, and that it may be taken notice of as her main grievance, she repeats it divers times over, and chews the Cud upon it liberally.

— ὦ ὑμῶν αἶον  
ἐγκλησεν, ὅτ' ὀπνυμφίδι  
πᾶ μέτις ὕμνῳ ὕμνησεν,  
ἀλλ' ἀχέροντι τυμφύσο —

Poor Girl, she does not relish her Sentence half so well as an *Epithalamium*. She thinks a soft Bed, and a warm Bed-fellow more comfortable by abundance, than a cold Grave. And who can blame her? But Matrimony runs strangely in her head. For a little after she's at it again, complaining of her want of a Husband, and is very sorry that she must cross the *Styx*, and visit her Parents with her Maiden-head about her.

πρὸς ὧς ἀρᾷ, ἄγαμ' ἃ  
δ' ἐγὼ μέτοιχ' ἔρομαι.

And immediately after she's at it again.

— ἀνυμφίαι

Un-

*Unmarried* is still the burthen of the Song. Nay, she is so full of it, that she can't forbear talking of a second Husband, in case she were a Widow.

τίσσι μὲν ἂν μοι καταγόντῃ, ἄλλῃ ὡ.

This thought of a second Husband is such a Refreshment to her, that she can't forbear dilating upon it. One wou'd think by the odd Frolicksome-ness of her complaints, and the whimsical Comforts she finds out, that she was only going to dance bare-foot at a Sisters VWedding. But within a few lines, she relapses again into her agonies of despair, and is more afraid of leading Apes in Hell, than e're a hopeless Antiquated Damsel within our Bills of Mortality. She is not so much concern'd at dying, but to go out of the world,

ἄλεκτον, αὐμόριον, ὅτε τῷ γάμῳ  
μὲν ῥ' λαχούσας.

and not to have one Honey Moon, not so much as a merey Bout before she went, was a hardship she cou'd not bear with any temper.

VVe

WE may find by this Lady's complaint, that she was very desirous to dispose of her Maiden-head ; but for any thing that appears from her complaint or behaviour, she was very indifferent to whom. 'Twas a Burthen she long'd to be rid of, and seem'd not to care who eas'd her ; for she does not mention her Contract with *Hæmon*, which she decently might, but laments her want of a Husband in general terms, without giving the least hint of an Honourable Love for any particular person.

These are extraordinary Speculations for a dying Person. However, Mr Collier admires the Poets conduct in this case, and were he Ordinary no doubt but we shou'd have these Flowers transplanted in great plenty to the last Speeches of his dying Females. He thinks 'tis out of pure regard to Modesty and Decency, that *Antigone* takes no notice of *Hæmon* in her complaints. I shall not dispute, whether 'twere the fashion in the days of *Sophocles* or not ; but I am sure 'tis accounted but an ill Symptome of Modesty in our Age, when a young Lady shews an impatience to be married, before she has made a Settlement of  
her

her Affection upon any Individual Man.

However, *Antigone's* Carriage is not singular; *Electra*, another Lady of much the same Quality and Character, (tho not under those immediate apprehensions of Death) declares her self of the same Opinion. She's in great distress too for want of a Husband, and complains very heavily upon that score.

*Instance in  
Electra of  
the same  
Author.*

— ἄτεκνός,  
τάλαν' ἀνύμφιονός, αἰὲν οἰχνῶ  
δάκρυσι μυδαλίσα.

Nor is *Euripides* a whit more tender in this point. The Royal *Polyxena*, just before she was to be led away as a Victim to the *Manes* of *Achilles*, harps upon the same string. It lies very heavy upon her Spirits, that she must go out of the World in ignorance.

— ἄποιμι δὴ κάτω  
ἀνυμρός, ἀνυμφάωός, ὧν μ' ἐχρῆτο τυχεῖν.

This Princess's complaint is yet more unreasonable than either of the former, and more unbecoming the Modesty of her Sex, and the greatness of her Birth  
and



and Courage, as 'tis both before and afterwards shewn. Shewn as a Captive, a part of the Plunder of the sack'd City, one that besides her own unhappy Destiny, which hung immediately over her head, had the Ruin and Miseries of her Country and Family fresh in view, to put all wanton thoughts out of her head. Besides, she cou'd not expect to ascend the insolent Conquerors Bed any otherwise than as his Vassal, the Slave of his Lust and Pleasure, which, as it was below her to comply with, but upon Force, so it must be a Slavish Baseness, as well as Wantonness and Incontinence, to desire it under her Circumstances.

It were easy to bring many Instances more of this kind, but I think it would be tedious and unnecessary to multiply instances in a plain case. I think it likewise a labour altogether as superfluous to spend more words to shew the vast disproportion between the innocent Extravagance of *Ophelia's* Frenzy, and the sober Rants of *Antigone*, *Electra*, and *Polyxena*. To suppose the Reader cou'd over-look that, were to affront his Understanding.

But before I part with *Antigone*, I shall beg leave to make one observation more. Mr Collier takes notice, that *Cassandra*, in reporting the misfortunes of the Greeks, stops at the Adulteries of *Clytemnestra* and *Ægiale*. And gives this handsome reason for making a halt. P. 35.

Ζυγὰν ἀμεινον τ' αὐχεν.

Foul things are best unsaid.

From whence he observes, that *Some things are dangerous in report, as well as practice, and many times a Disease in the Description*. This *Euripides* was aware of, and manag'd accordingly, and was remarkably regular both in *Stile* and *Manners*.

This was indeed an extraordinary piece of niceness in *Euripides*, more I think by a great deal, than he was oblig'd to, and I am sure more than he has shewn upon other occasions. *Cassandra* might have foretold the Discovery of the Adulteries of *Clytemnestra* and *Ægiale*, without any Indecencies of Language, or shocking the most tender Ear, had the Poet so pleas'd.

So-

Antigone  
in Sopho-  
cles not so  
nice.

*Sophocles*, who was as good a Judge and as careful an observer of decency as *Euripides*, gives his *Antigone* more liberty; tho had he thought it indecent, he might with better reason have excus'd her. 1st, Because what *Antigone* says is no way necessary, being neither provok'd by any thing that preceeded, nor of use to the promoting of the Action, or the Information of the Audience. 2dly, Because she thereby revives the Infamy of her Parents, and refreshes the scandalous impressions, which her own Incestuous Birth must needs have made upon the Audience to her disadvantage.

Ἰὼ ματρῶναι λίκτρων  
ἄται, κοίμῃματ' αὐτοφύηται  
Ἄμψ' πατεὶ δυσμερὲν ματρὶς  
Οἶον ἐγὼ τοῖς ἀταλαίφρων ἴσον.

If *Antigone* might be thus free with her own Family without breach of Modesty, I can't see why *Cassandra* shou'd be so tender of an Enemy, whom she was just going to supplant in her Bed; and in the divulging of whose Faults, as well as Misfortunes, she might be allow'd to take some Plea-

Pleasure, as a sort of anticipation of the satisfaction, which she took in the Revenge of the Destruction of her Family, which she foresaw was to come. But *Cassandra* lov'd doing better than talking. For in the Speech foregoing to this, which Mr *Collier* commends so much for the Modesty of it, *Cassandra* runs almost mad for Joy, that *Agamemnon* would take her to his Bed, and calls in an Enthusiastick manner upon *Hymen*, upon *Hecate*, and *Apollo* to grace the Ceremony. She desires her Mother, and the miserable *Phrygians*, about her to adorn themselves, be merry, and dance, and sing, as if her Father were in the height of his prosperity. The *Chorus* hereupon desires *Hecuba* to curb her, and keep her from running voluntarily to the *Grecian* Camp. Her Mother accordingly reprimands her, and tells her she thought their Calamities might have made her more modest, that Tears better became their Fortune, than Nuptial Songs or Torches.

*Cassandra*  
not so nice  
as Mr Col-  
lier pre-  
tends.

— Οἱ μὲν τῶνον,  
ὅς ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς, ὅς ἐκ τῆς ἀρχῆς δεσφός,

X

ἑλπίς



Γάμους γαμήδαι τῆσδ' ἐνέξαζον ποτὶ.  
 Παράδ' ἑμὲ φῶς, ὃ δ' ὄρθαν πυρροφῶς  
 Μαινὰς διαύξας, ἐδὶ σ' αἰ τύχαι τέκνον  
 Σεσωφρονίκασεν, ἀλλ' ἔτ' ἐν ταυτῷ μῦθῳ.  
 Εἰσφέρειτε πεύκας, δάκρυά τ' ἀνταλλάττει  
 Τοῖς τῶςδε μέλεσι Τροάδες γαμηλίοις.

Extrai-  
 tion of  
 Casandra

This Reproof has a strange Operation upon *Casandra*. For instead of reclaiming and reducing her to reason, it makes her ten times madder. She falls to cross purposes with her Mother, and as if she had been *Pandress* in the case, calls upon her to crown her victorious head, and with her Joy of her Royal Match. She bids her lead her, and if she does not make hast enough, she wou'd have her push violently on.

Μᾶλλον, πύκαζε κερτ' ἑμὲν νικηφόρον,  
 Καὶ τοῖς ἑμοῖσι βασιλικοῖς γέμοις,  
 Καὶ πέμπτε, καὶ μὴ τ' ἀμά σοι πρὸ θυμῷ γῶ  
 ὦδεν βιβαίως.

Is this the Modest, the bashful *Casandra*, so demure, that she can't name adultery, tho' in an Enemy, and yet so forward to act it, that no restraints of Shame or Misery can keep her within bounds.

It may perhaps be objected in Defence of *Cassandra*, that her Joy and Transport springs not from any Pleasure or Satisfaction, that she shou'd take in this Match, but from the Prospect she had of revenging the Quarrel of her Family, and the Ruine and Destruction which she foresaw shou'd thence come upon the House of *Atreus* her mortal Enemies.

Admit this to be true. Yet *Cassandra* <sup>Indecency</sup> pushes her Resentments too far, when <sup>against Chastity</sup> she sacrifices her Virtue and Modesty to her Revenge. Had *Cassandra* been represented as a Woman of a furious vindictive Spirit, she might in a sudden fit of Rage have rashly sacrificed all Considerations to the Violence of her present Fury. But then if the Character be virtuous in the main, such Outrages are not offered to Modesty, till after prodigious struggles, and racking Convulsions of Mind. Passion must not triumph over Reason and Honour, but with vast labour and difficulty, and in those Breasts only, where it is the ruling, uncontrollable Power, and where the prospect of its success is great, and immediate, and is

in Women provoked as well by Appetite as Inclination.

But this is none of *Cassandra's* case. She shared indeed amongst the rest the common Fate, and became a Slave, and a Prey to the victors Lust and Avarice. This might naturally make her with the utter confusion of the Destroyers of her Country and Family ; but not at the expence of her Fame and Virtue. 'Twas all she had left to comfort her ; and as *Andromache* in the same Play could inform her, of infinitely more worth, than the wretched remainder of a servile Life. This therefore should not have been parted with at any rate, much less upon a slender consideration. Had she submitted to necessity only, and comply'd as a Slave with reluctance to the desires of *Agamemnon*, as *Andromache* does to *Pyrrhus*, she had saved her Modesty, and secured her Revenge ev'ry whit as well. The Disasters of *Agamemnon* and his House, interpreted as a Punishment of her's, and her Family's wrongs, tho they were only Prophetically fore-known by her, had given a sullen sort of Comfort, and afforded a reason for her resignation of her self

to

to the Conquerors Pleasure. But if the Poet designed her for so implacable a Character, as to take such great satisfaction in, and purchase at so dear a rate a Prospect only of Revenge at such a distance, by which she herself must be crushed, and all her Friends either dead, or so dispersed as to have no interest in the accomplishment of it : he ought to have prepar'd the Audience for so unaccountable an extravagance, by some notice of the Violence of her Temper, either by something from her own mouth or Conduct previous to this, or from the mouth of some Friend of her's, that might have abated the surprize of such a resolution. Especially since he was resolved she should appear no more by her future modest behaviour to qualify the Scandal of this Misdemeanour.

This Lady being set up by Mr *Collier* as the Standard of Modesty, I have examined her Conduct the more at large ; and am very willing to leave it to the decision of the Reader, whether *Cassandra* or *Ophelia* would best become the Cloyster, or most needs the Discipline of the Nunnery in *Moorfields*.



Misbehav-  
our of He-  
cuba.

We have seen how this Lady can behave her self upon occasion. Let us examine her Mother, that corrected her wantonness so seasonably upon this occasion. She as older shou'd have more wit, and yet she forgets herself extreemly too sometimes. In the Play that bears her name, *Hecuba* comes to *Agamemnon*, complains of the murther of her Son *Polydorus* by *Polymestor*, and to move him to Compassion begins a wanton Discourse of the Pleasures of Love to him, tho she thinks at the same time, that 'tis impertinent, yet she's resolv'd it shall out.

Καὶ μὲν ἴσως μὴ τῷ λόγῳ κενὸν τόδε,  
Κύπειν περβάλλειν. ἀλλ' ὅμως ἐρήσεται.

As an old Woman she had the privilege of tattling. But as a Prudent Woman, she ought to have handled her Daughters disgrace a little more tenderly. The good old Lady ne'r minces the matter, but outs with all roundly, and is concerned, that any thing shou'd abate of the satisfaction *Cassandra* might have in so good a Bedfellow.

Πρὸς σῇσι πλευρῇσι πάς ἂν κοιμίζεται,  
Ἥ φοίβῃ, ἢ καλοῦσι Καταίδραν φεύγει.  
Ποῦ τὰς φίλας θητ' εὐφρόνας δεύεις, ἀνάξ,  
Ἥ τῶν ἐν εὐνῇ φιλάτων ἀσπασμάτων  
Χάει τὴν ἔξαιταῖς ὁμή.

This is plain dealing, but something below the Dignity of the Queen of *Asia*, at the lowest ebb of her Fortune. What follows is fit only for the Mouth of a Drunken Midwife at a Christening in *Wapping*.

Ἐλ τὴ σκότῃ γὰρ, νεκτέρων τ' ἀσπασμάτων,  
φίλων ἡμῶν τι, τοῖς βελτοῖς πολλὰ χεῖς.

After these remarkable Instances of the regularity of *Euripides*, both in Style and Manners, I suppose our Poets may venture to shew their Faces in his Company, without danger of putting him to the blush with their want of Modesty. But the Antients, it seems, had very little *Love* or *Courtship* in their Plays. Perhaps so. But they had Lust and Violence, which Mr *Collier* thinks more eligible. The fault of the Modern Lovers, it seems, is too much tenderness and fooling away their time in idle Talk. The vigorous Antients went more roundly to work, their's were like *Spanish* Intrigues, two words struck the bargain betwixt 'em.

*Love and  
Tenderness  
used by the  
Moderns.  
Lust and  
Violence by  
the Anti-  
ents.*

Numerous  
instances of  
this kind to  
be found in  
Euripides.

'Twere easie to multiply instances of this nature from *Euripides*, were that my Design. But I love not to rake into the Ashes of the Dead for that which isn't worth finding. Yet that the Reader, if he has the curiosity, may have the satisfaction, I shall refer him to the Places where they are to be found ; where he that has a mind to a more ample Collection , may be abundantly furnished.

Some ver-  
y good co.

*Hermione* rails at *Andromache* in terms very misbecoming her Sex, Quality, and Years. *Andromache* reproves her for it in terms yet less befeeming a sober Matron, and casts a scandalous aspersiion upon her whole Sex. *Crensa* makes a foul relation of her rape by *Apollo*, and descends nauseously to particulars with her Servant. *Ion* her Son civilly questions his Mother, whether she had not play'd the Whore with some base Groom, and to cover her disgrace laid her Bastard (himself) fallly to *Apollo's* charge. *Electra's* manners are much of the same size and complexion ; when she is urging her Brother *Orestes* to the murder of *Ægisthus* ; she bids him ring in his Ears the who-  
ring

ring of her Mother, and tell him, that since he had a Whore of her he must expect sharers in her, and be the Cuckold of other Men, as her Father had been his. That he was notorious for her Cully all the Town over. This sort of stuff she lets run over without regard to Decency, and rambles as wantonly thro the Infamy of her Family, as is if 'twere only Scandal pickt up at a Gossiping, in which they had no particular Concern.

Whoever consults these and divers Passages, as well in *Sophocles* as *Euripides*, will find the most exceptionable Passages in our Poets, whether Comick or Tragick very excusable, upon a fair Construction, let it be never so severe within the Bounds of Justice.

*Seneca* has received Absolution, and is pronounced clear of the sin of Uncleaness. Yet with Mr *Collier's* leave, since he is introduced to vilify and depreciate the Moderns, he is bound to confront 'em, and answer for his own Conduct, before he takes upon him magisterially to censure and correct others. But since tis not so much his act as Mr *Collier's*, who has ventured to be

*Seneca examined upon this Article.*



be his Godfather, and answer for him, a slight Inquisition shall excuse him. We shall not require so severe a Proof of his Chastity as the Ordeal Tryal. It shall be sufficient for him to enter his Protestation against what has been done in his Name.

*M. Scarrion*

*q. Phædra*

In his *Hippolytus*, *Phædra* is possessed with a scandalous, incestuous Passion, and she indulges it at as loose, a scandalous rate. She enters first with her Resolution, as strong as her Desires. She is not concerned at the Nature or Consequentes of so vile a Passion, but at the difficulty of satisfying it. She appears at first sight full grown and confirm'd in Wickedness, and instead of condemning and endeavouring to stifle so lewd, a licentious Flame, she animates her self to the accomplishment of her design by a recrimination upon her Husband, and rips up, amongst others, even those of his Faults, to which herself had been accessory, and the sole occasion of his Guilt. But what is more strange and unnatural, she draws matter of Comfort and Encouragement from the monstrous Lewdness of her Mother, and the Infamy of her House. But what's

what's most wonderful of all, she's come to this height of Impudence, before she well knows what ails her; she is but just arrived at the Discovery of her Malady. She can neither Eat, Sleep, Work, nor Pray; but she burns, and boils inwardly like *Ætna* it self, and is all agog on the sudden for hunting and handling the Boarspear: She knows not why, till at length she finds, that she's her Mother's own Daughter, and so the Myſtery comes out.

*Quo tendis anime? quid furens saltus  
amas?*

*Fatale miſeræ matris agnoſco malum,  
Peccare noſter novit in Sylvis amor.*

*Genetrix, tui me miſeret, infando malo  
Correpta pecoris efferi ſævum ducem*

*Audax amaſti. Torvus impatiens guge*

*Adulter ille, ductor indomiti gregis.*

*Sed amabat aliquid: Quis meas miſe-  
ræ Deus,*

*Aut quis juvare Dædalus flammæ queat?*

*Non ſi ille remeet arte mœſtopia potens,*

*Qui noſtra cæca monſtra concludet domo,*

*Promittat ullam caſibus noſtris opem.*

— *Nulla Minois lævi*

*De.*

*Defuncta amore est : jungitur semper  
nefas.*

'Twas the fate of her Family, it seems, and she was by no means for contending with her destiny, and therefore surrenders upon the first Summons of her passion. Her Mother, she thinks, was much oblig'd to *Dædalus*, whose ingenuity brought her and her horned Lover together. But alas ! Poor Soul, She's hard put to't. Her Mother's Bull was a gentle tender-hearted Gallant, to her Savage obdurate Son-in-law ; and she, good woman , had no such necessary helps for her Consolation. What must she do ? Her Nurse advises her to strangle this Incestuous Brat, her Passion, in the Birth. But she bravely resolves to push on, whatever comes on't.

*Quemcumq; dederit exitum casus, feram.*

Is this the modest *Phædra*, whose Language is under such discipline ? Can she be so free with the Infamy of her House, make such fulsome descriptions, and envy her Mother the caresses  
ot

of a Bull? But the Nurse mends the matter, and reproves her severely. Here therefore we may expect a sample of strict and exemplary modesty, and chaste expression.

*Sed ut secundus Numinum abscondat  
favor*

*Coitus nefandos*—and immediately after  
——— *Metue concubitus novos.*

*Miscere thalamos Patris, & Nati ap-  
paras,*

*Uteroq; prolem capere confusam impio.*

Is this the disciplin'd Language Mr Collier boasts of? Such we have indeed sometimes under the discipline of *Bridewel* and *Bedlam*, but seldom elsewhere. The most accomplish'd Disciple that ever came out of the late famous Academy of the virtuous Mrs Meggs of notable Memory, cou'd not have been more free in her Language, as well as Thoughts. The *Antients*, good Men, did not puzzle their Heads about double *entendre's* to screen a foul thought, or labour for Allegories and Allusions, but honestly called a Spade, a Spade, whenever they had occasion. I believe these



these Ladies would be better company for *Joan of Naples*, than Mr *Dryden's Leonora*, if fulsome Descriptions be so toothsome to her.

*Modesty of  
Lycus con-  
sider.*

But Mr *Collier* is mightily pleased, that there is no courting, except in the *Hercules Furens*, where the Tyrant *Lycus* addresses *Megara* very briefly, and in modest remote Language. Here he has pointed us a Specimen of what he calls modest and remote. The Tyrant had courted *Megara*, the Wife of *Hercules*, to no purpose, she obstinately repulsed him; and therefore he turns him about, and modestly (as Mr *Collier* thinks) thus addresses himself to *Amphitruo*. You have Pimpt for Jupiter to your Wife, and shall do as much for me to your Daughter-in-Law, having so expert a Master it can be no novelty either to her, or her Husband, to be civil to their Betters. But if she obstinately refuses to comply, I'll force her, and beget a generous Race.

*Jovi dedisti conjugem, Regi dabis.  
Et te magistro non novum hoc discet  
Nurus,*

*Etiam viro probante, meliorem sequi,  
Sin copulari pertinax tædis negat,*

*Vel*

*Vel ex coacta nobilem partum feram.*

This, according to Mr Collier, is Distance and Modesty, Old Stile. If he will make these allowances to our *Poets*, I'll engage to prove there never was an immodest thing said upon the *English Stage*; a task I shou'd be loth to undertake upon any other terms, as much as I am perswaded of their comparative Innocence.

But 'tis not in his Judgment only, <sup>References to other instances.</sup> that Mr Collier can be partial; his Memory can be favourable too upon occasion. For tho he does *non omnibus dormire*, yet he can wink at the Faults of his old Friends; while he sees ev'ry slip of the Moderns double. He says, that *Seneca* has no courting but this of *Lycus*; but I suppose, he wilfully forgets the shameful solicitations which *Phædra* uses to corrupt her Son-in-Law *Hippolitus*, against the Charter of her Sex, and the rules of Decency. They, whose curiosity invites 'em to a further enquiry, may find matter in abundance for their speculations, in the *Agamemnon*, particularly in the Scenes between *Clytemnestra* and her Nurse, *Ægisthus*

*Ægisthus* and *Clytemnestra*, *Electra* and *Clytemnestra*; and in divers others places of the rest of the Plays of that Collection.

*These Faults  
less pardon-  
able in  
Tragedy,  
than Co-  
medy.*

If we should examine the *Ancient Comedy* with the severity that Mr Collier uses to the *Moderns*, we should let in such a torrent of Citations, as would almost over-whelm us. But for the reasons already given, there are grains of allowance to be made to *Comedy*, to which *Tragedy* can lay no claim. *Tragedy* deals with persons of the highest Condition, by and before whom the strictest severity of Manners and Decorum is to be observ'd. The business is of great importance, and requires serious consideration, and gives no opportunity for wantonness, or light indecencies. Whenever therefore the Poet suffers such persons to talk such Fooleries themselves, or others to talk 'em to 'em, he stoops 'em below their Characters and Business. But in *Comedy* the case is quite different, both the persons and business are little, and exact neither State nor Ceremony. Most of the persons are such, as either don't know, or don't regard Forms and

Punctilio's of good Breeding. This we have a plain Proof of in all the Comedies of Antiquity, whether of the old or new Cut. The Slaves are so familiar with their Masters, that by the freedoms they take, 'tis hard to distinguish one from t'other, except that the Slave bears the Character of Advantage, and appears generally to have more wit than his Master, whom he is to assist if he be young, and cheat if he be old. Accordingly we find 'em almost always bantering, quibbling, drol-ling, and jesting upon their Masters, when they are together. Their employment is usually to purchase their young Master a Mistress, with the Hunks their Old Masters money. By this means the Slaves become the Principal Character in the *Antient Comedy*, and are the main Spring, by which the whole Machine of the *Fable* is set a going. The rest, which are usually in the new Comedy, a covetous old Fellow, an extravagant young one, a Bawd, a Whore, a stolen Virgin, are but the under Wheels, whose motions are regulated altogether by those of the Slave, who is the Man of Intrigue, and carries all the Brains the

Y

Poet



*Poet* can spare about him. The old Man is froward, suspicious, severe, and close-fisted; and sometimes he is represented easy and indulgent, but has a scolding, turbulent, griping Wife, a churlish, parsimonious Brother, or Relation, or conceited Wife Friend, that takes upon himself to correct and govern him. The young Fellow is in Love, extravagant, and in want of Money. The *Bawd*, whether Male, or Female, is faithless, imposing, and acted only by present profit. The *Whore*, if an experienc'd one, is altogether Mercenary, if raw in her Trade, she is dotingly fond and loving, but under the care of the *Bawd*. The stolt Virgin is always next to a Mute.

Very little  
variety  
in their  
Plots.

Their *Plots* are confined to as narrow a compass, as their *Characters*. The young Man is in Love with a Slave, and wants money to purchase her of the *Bawd*, who is about to sell, or prostitute her to another. The young Man in this exigent has recourse to a crafty Servant, who helps by some Stratagem to squeeze the money out of the old Spunge his Father, or to cheat some other Body. A discovery at length is made

made to his Father, who is vehemently provoked at his Sons folly and extravagance, and threatens to disinherit him. Young Master and Man are at their wits end, to reconcile themselves to the old Man, and no fetch, no contrivance left to bring themselves off, when in comes some Merchant or Stranger, who discovers that this Maiden is a Citizen, and well born; which pacifies the Old Fellow, the young Man thrives in his amours, a match is struck up by consent of all Parties, and all's well again.

'Tis true, *Aristophanes* took a much greater compass, and brought not only *Mankind*, but *Gods*, *Brute Animals*, and even *inanimate Bodies* within the Pale of the *Stages*. This, as it enlarg'd his walk, encreas'd his Liberty, which he sometimes abuses at a scandalous unjustifiable rate. Mr *Collier*, to obviate all objections that might be rais'd from the practice of *Aristophanes*, whose *Comedies* are the only pieces of that kind remaining of the *Greek Stage*, by way of prevention excepts against his Credit, and endeavours to invalidate his Evidence by accusing him of *Atheism*.

*Greater Liberty taken by Aristophanes.*

*Aristophanes  
whether an  
Atheist or  
not nothing  
to the pur-  
pose.*

But tho I think Mr *Collier's* Arguments to prove him an Atheist to be of no validity, as I could easily shew, were it not an impertinent digression in this place ; yet I shall wave the particular refutation of 'em , because I think it not material to the point in hand, whether he were so or not. For tho we should grant, that the Poet himself was an Atheist, yet Mr *Collier* himself will not pretend that his Audience, the people of *Athens* were so too. On the contrary it appears that they were as arrant Bigots, as Mr *Collier* himself could wish to trade with. They put *Socrates* to death , only because he would not be cullied out of his reason, and be the Priest's Fool , to countenance and encourage a senseless extravagant superstition. This made some Christian Fathers reckon him among the *Martyrs* for the *Unity* of the *Deity*.

But Mr *Collier*, who has a much better hand at supposing than proving, takes a very odd method to clear the reputation of that great man from the suggestions of *Aristophanes* , and the censure of his Country, by whom he was condemn'd for *Atheism*. *That*

*That Socrates was no Atheist is clear from Instances enow. To mention but one. The confidence he had in his Demon or Genius, by which he govern'd his Affairs, puts it beyond dispute.*

That Socrates held, and believ'd the existence of *Demons* or *Genii*, may be an argument, that he was no *Atheist*. This Argument considered. But that he pretended to have any Familiarity, or hold any Correspondence with such a *Demon* or *Genius*, gives me but a very indifferent notion of his Faith and Integrity. It smells rank of Imposture, and must needs make but a bad Impression upon men of Integrity, and Understanding of those Principles, which want the support of such dishonest shifts. But this was *Plato's* report of him, and perhaps was neither the real practice nor opinion of *Socrates*, whom therefore we shall dismiss, as having been brought in only to shew how unluckily Mr *Collier* is gifted for Argument.

But if the *Athenians* could proceed with such Rigour against a man so much rever'd for his Virtue and Wisdom, and supported by the favour of their best and greatest men only, for holding

Rigour of the Athenians to Socrates a sort of Acquaintance of Aristophanes.



pinions contrary to their Notions of Religion, 'tis not to be imagin'd, that they who were so very tender in this case, so extreemly sensible of any affront to the Common Faith, would with so little concern, or rather so much satisfaction, have heard it publicly insulted by *Aristophanes*. They shew'd in the case of *Socrates*, that their Blood could rise and ferment upon such occasions as high as any people's. How comes it then, that they who were so outrageous and impatient with *Socrates*, are so tame, and passive as to bear much greater Provocations of the same Nature from *Aristophanes* without the least sign of Resentment? Was the interest of the *Poet* so much superiour to the *Philosophers*, that what was capital in one shou'd deserve no manner of correction, or notice in t'other? No such matter, for he was call'd in question, and took his Tryal for a thing of much less moment *viz.* For assuming the Liberties of a Citizen of *Athens* being a Foreigner. Now there is no doubt, but his Enemies who had the malice and the power to get him thus arraign'd, would have strengthen'd their Charge, with an Article

ticle so considerable as *Atheism*, and *Blasphemy* against their *Gods*, before such superstitious bigotted Judges as the *Athenians*, had there been any ground or colour of suspicion. The Power and Malice of *Cleon* wou'd have reach'd, him, had there been any plausible pretence, to have fixt the guilt of a Crime so unpopular upon him.

Mr *Collier* pretends to maintain his assertion by divers instances of irreverent passages in relation to their *Gods*, to be found in the Plays of *Aristophanes*. I grant there are such passages, even more than Mr *Collier* has cited, tho many of those which he has selected to prove his Allegation by, will by no means bear the weight of such a Charge. But the people of *Athens*, who were in these matters much more delicate, than Mr *Collier* seems to be, had the niceness to distinguish justly between the *Private Sentiments* of the *Man*, and the *Publick* one's of the *Poet*. In this latter capacity almost all sorts of Characters belong to him, and he must of consequence be frequently necessitated to make use of Thoughts and Expressions very contrary to his own

Mr Col-  
lier's  
proof of his  
assertion.

The Opini-  
on of the  
Man not  
measured  
by the Ex-  
pressions of  
the Poet  
at Athens

proper opinion. The *Athenians* therefore did not lay these Liberties of the Stage, which they knew the nature of those Characters which he represented must of course oblige him to, as blemishes either in his Faith or Morals, to his Charge. Had Mr *Collier* been Master of as much Understanding and Justice, as these *Heathens*, not only *Aristophanes*, but our *English Poets* too had met with a fairer Adversary, and found civilier and honefter treatment. 'Twere easie to enlarge in the Justification of *Aristophanes*; but Mr *Collier* gives him up, and therefore we need no parallel between him, and the *English Comick Poets*, to prove the comparative modesty of the latter; for which reason we shall proceed directly to *Plautus* whom he justifies upon the comparison.

*Liberties of Plautus greater than those of the English Stage.* P. 15. *Plautus*, by reason of the narrow Circle that he moves in, affords no great variety, yet there is plenty enough in him, to make Mr *Collier* blush for his defence, if it were all produc'd at large. For what he calls *very moderate*, and says, *that our single Plays shall far outdo all this put together*, wou'd in his  
Mi-

*Microscopical* way of observing appear monstrous, and infinitely exceed the most malicious collection he can make out of the *English Poets*. But he presumes upon the ignorance of his Readers, and imposes arbitrarily and magisterially what sense he pleases upon every thing, and despotically coins Citations, which he forces upon 'em for genuine, upon no better warrant than his own Will and Pleasure. But to proceed to instance.

In the *Amphitruo*, Mercury, after a long scene of gross Drollery upon *Amphitruo*, bids him be gone, and not disturb his Master's pleasure with his Wife. *Instances from the Amphitruo*

*Abscede moneo, molestus ne sis, dum*  
*Amphitruo,*

*Cum uxore moda ex hostibus adveniens,*  
*voluptatem capit.*

Upon this *Amphitruo* asks, What Wife? and is answer'd *Alcumena*. This does not satisfy his curiosity, but he must know whether *he lies with her* or not; and is not contented till he has doubl'd the Question, and must be inform'd, whether they lie in the same room both  
or



or not. Hereupon *Mercury*, to cut the debate short, gives him this plain answer.

*Corpore corpus incubat.*

Upon this *Amphitruo* bewails his misery, and *Mercury* in mockery says,

*Lucrist, quod hic miseriam deputat. Nam  
uxorem usurariam  
Perinde est præbere, ac si agrum sterilem  
fodiendum loces.*

*The man's a gainer by what he calls his misery. For 'tis as profitable to have ones Wife, as ones Field till'd by another.*

Remarkable Circumstances of this Passage.

The Disguise under which *Mercury* appears no excuse for his misbehaviour.

At this rate *Mercury* drolls on ; wherein there is this remarkable, besides the quality of the persons, one a God, t'other a Heroe, that the words last cited are suppos'd to be spoken aside out of the hearing of *Amphitruo* ; and consequently are immediately address'd and peculiarly recommended to the Audience, as containing something very edifying or very entertaining.

I defy Mr *Collier* to prove any such licentious freedoms upon the *English*  
*Am-*

*Amphitruo*, as angry as he is with it. But perhaps Mr *Collier* thinks the disguise of *Sofia*, may excuse the ribaldry of *Mercury*. But this excuse won't serve his turn. For *Mercury* is under no disguise to the Audience, to whom this last Speech is particularly address'd.

But lest he should think *Mercury* a Mad God, and allow him the liberty of Ribaldry, let us hear how cleanly *Jupiter* will express himself. It the last Scene this Sovereign of the Gods appears in state, owns his Quality and Intrigue, and bids *Amphitruo* receive his Wife. For, says he,

*Jupiter not  
more mo-  
dest.*

*Mea vi subacta est.*

Mr *Collier* knows the meaning of the word *Subigo* in this case, and must strain as hard in this place, as he thinks *Lambin* has done in another, if he will defend it.

The *Asinaria*, the next Play in order, affords besides the Scene betwixt *Cleareta* the Bawd, and *Argyrippus*, (which Mr *Collier* confesses to border upon rudeness, and I think down-right Bawdy in several places) two more, one betwixt

*Instances  
from the  
Asinaria.*

*Argy-*

Instance of  
singular  
Morality.

*Argyrippus*, *Philenium*, *Leonida*, and *Libanus*, which is very loose, and another, which is singularly instructive, between *Argyrippus* and *Demenetus* his Father. The old man, like a good Father, purchases a Whore for his Son, upon condition that himself may come in for snacks, and withal tells him, that it becomes a young man to be modest, and let his Betters go before him, that he had provided a Mistress for him to solace himself with all the year, if he could but be content, to let his Father be his Taster. This is wholesom Doctrine, and season'd with such grave Morality, no doubt very edifying. This Mr *Collier* finds no fault with, and therefore we may very well pass it by ; since, if it will bear the Test of his Hypothesis, it will unquestionably of ours. Tho, had this been of *English* growth, it had found no favour, but had smarted unmercifully under his discipline.

*Plautus's*  
*Lovers*  
more  
active  
than talk-  
ative.

One thing 'tis necessary to take notice of before we go any further, and that is, that whether *Plautus's* Lovers talk Love, or not, they act it very plainly and vigorously before Folks, where-

where-ever they come together. An <sup>Instanced  
from the  
Curtulio.</sup> instance of this kind we have in the *Curtulio* at the meeting of *Phædromus*, and *Planesium*, (who by the by is suppos'd to be a modest Virgin). At their purchas'd opportunity of coming together, they are so active and boisterous, that *Palinurus* the Slave stands amaz'd, and cries out,

————— *uterq; insaniunt.*  
*Viden' ut misere moliuntur, nequeunt*  
*complexi satis.*

These words are more expressive of Action than Passion, though indeed they imply both. *Planesium*, to mend the matter, expresses her discontent, that the Servant did not withdraw, but staid to be a check upon 'em.

*Jam huic voluptati hoc adjunctum odium est.*

The Servant replies with indignation, and reprimands his Master for behaving himself so immodestly,

--- *Ut immodestis hic te moderere moribus.*



*Comparative  
true Mo-  
desty of the  
Virgins of  
the Anti-  
ent Stage  
hence to be  
observed.*

I mention this only to shew how much even the modest Virgins of the *Antient* Stage valued an opportunity. This, according to Mr *Collier's Hypothesis*, would have been a Capital misdemeanour upon the *English* Stage, whatever it was upon the *Roman*. Many more instances of this kind, and more plain ones might be produc'd, but I have not room for 'em here. However, this may serve to shew what sort of *Nun's* Flesh Mr *Collier* wou'd be at, when he makes *Vestals* of such Lassies as this.

*Mr Col-  
lier's own  
exceptions  
taken no-  
tice of.*

P. 17.

Mr *Collier* is so very fond of the Sobriety of *Plautus's* Plays, that he defends even the Conduct of the *Pandars* and *Slaves*, and maintains, that they don't misbehave themselves before Women. He is sure at least, that *there* are but four instances to the contrary, as he remembers, *Olympio*, *Palæstrio*, *Stratilax* and *Dordalus* are the persons. And the Women they discourse with, are two of them *Slaves*, and the third a *Wench*.

*His instance  
in Olym-  
pio grossly  
mistaken, or  
misrepres-  
ented.*

I'm sorry Mr *Collier's* memory is so bad, when he has so much occasion for a better. He takes notice of but three Women thus freely dealt with, two whereof

whereof, as he tells us by way of mitigation of damages, were Slaves, and the third a Wench. From whence he seems to infer, that before Women of Modesty and Condition, these *Slaves* and *Pandars* were more cautious and reserv'd in their Language. But *Olympio*, whom he has subpœna'd as an Evidence for himself, will tell him otherwise. The persons he plays *his Gambols* before, are *Cleostrata* and *Marrhina*, two principal Citizens Wives, Matrons of as great Quality and Virtue as any, that e're trod the *Roman Stage* in *Comedy*; *Alcumena* excepted. These Matrons had sham'd him with a man in woman's Cloaths for a Bride, and big with the expectation of the issue of their jest, fell to catechizing him about the business. The Clown, without regard to their Quality, which was the more considerable in *Cleostrata*, because she was his proper Mistress, and might severely chastise any rudeness, yet the Clown, I say, makes a very rank description, and what's worse, the women were pleas'd with it, and urge and prompt him forward.

Ol.

Casina  
Act 5 Scen.  
2.

Ol. — *illa haud verbum facit, & sepi  
veste, id qui estis,*

*Ubi illum saltum video obseptum, rogo,  
ut altero sinat adire.*

*Enim jam magis jam appropero, magis  
jam lubet in Casinam irruere. —*

This, instead of rebating the edge of his Mistresses Appetite, inflames her curiosity yet more ; she's impatient till he proceeds.

Cl. *Perdis, quin pergis.*

Cl. — *continuo stricto gladio: atat  
babæ papæ.* Cl. *Quid papæ.*

Ol. — *Gladium ne haberet metui, id  
querere occapi*

*Dum gladium ne habeat quero, arripio  
capulum,*

*Sed quem cogito non habuit gladium, nam  
id esset Frigidius.*

Here the Booby began to mince the matter ; and his Mistress, that lov'd plain-dealing, corrects him for it, and bids him speak out, but he is a sham'd, he says,

Cl. *Eloquere.* Ol. *At pudet.*

The

The Slave however has some grace. His Mistress can't be satisfy'd so, she's for every thing in as proper terms, as if he was giving evidence in a Court of Record. But not prevailing that way, she prompts and pumps him with Interrogatories as loosely as a waggish Counsel at a Bawdy Tryal.

Cl. *Nam radix fuit ? Num cucumis ?*

The Woman, 'tis plain, had a true apprehension of the matter, but she did not like his clownish Bashfulness. Still the fellow boggles at naked Imagery ; however he improves, and comes on apace.

Ol. *Profecto non fuit quicquam olerum  
Nisi quicquid erat, calamitas profecto at-  
tigerat nunquam :*

*Ita quicquid erat, grande erat.  
Volo, ut obvoortat cubitissim,  
Verbum ullum mutit,  
Surgam ut ineam.*

If we measure the Conversation of *Plautus's* Ladies of Quality by this Standard, the Ladies of our Stage, taking  
Z even



even the loofest, need not be aſham'd of their Breeding. Nay, they wou'd bluſh for their company if they were brought together.

*Instance  
from the  
Afinaria.*

But *Cleoſtrata* and *Murrhina* are not ſingular. In the *Afinaria*, *Artemona*, upon the diſcovery of her Huſbands intrigue, reflects upon his Failings towards her, and makes a very odd diſcovery of her own wants.

Art. ——— *Ego cenſeo*  
*Eum etiam hominem Senatui dare operam,*  
*aut Clientibus*  
*Ibi labore deſaſſatum noctem totam ſtertere.*  
*Ille opere foris faciundo laſſus noctu ad-*  
*venit.*  
*Fundum alienum arat, incultum familia-*  
*rem deſerit.*

He was ( ſays ſhe ) ſo taken up with tilling another's ground, that he let his own lye fallow.

This frankneſs of the Lady's complaint gave the Slave her Informer the boldneſs to put a very homely queſtion to her.

*Poffis*

*Possis si forte accubantem tuum virum conspexeris*

*Cum corona amplexum amicam, si videas cognoscere ?*

*Could you know your Husband, if you shou'd see him and his Mistress in a posture that wou'd not shew his Face.*

This passage ( to use a Phrase of Mr Collier's ) I have translated *softly*, but very fairly. Yet even thus the Image, which in the Original is express'd in the proper vulgar terms, appears too gross and plain, and is such as wou'd not be endur'd upon our Stage, as lewd as Mr Collier thinks that and the Age.

However, *The Men who talk intemperately are generally Slaves*, says Mr Collier ; and he can't find any Gentleman guilty of an indecent expression, except *Lusiteles*, who is once *over airy*. I shall help him to another, out of a great number, that are ready upon demand, which is the more authentick, because it comes from a grave old Gentleman in no very airy mood, but while

*Slaves not the only Offenders of this kind in Plautus.*

he is correcting another for his Lewdness and Debauchery. In the *Miles Gloriosus*, *Periplectomenes* asks *Pyrgopolinices* the Souldier,

*Miles Gloriosus.*

*Cur es ausus subagitare alienam uxorem, impudens ?*

The Gravity of the man here makes the grossness of the Expression the more remarkable. After these instances I hope, Mr *Collier* may upon second thoughts have a better opinion of the Gentlemen and Ladies of our Stage, than heretofore, at least that he will do 'em more Justice in his next Parallel.

If Prologues and Epilogues are always inoffensive.

P 17.

But Mr *Collier* has one hold to retreat to yet, from whence he must be driven before we part. *Plautus* his Prologues and Epilogues are inoffensive. If this can be maintain'd, he has gain'd a great point; but here, as in other places, he triumphs before Victory. The *Prologue* and *Epilogue* are properly the Speeches of the Poet, and 'tis in them, if any where, that we discover the *Morals* of a *Comick Poet*. *Lambin* finds a double *entendre* in the *Prologue* to the *Pœnulus*; Mr *Collier* thinks there is a strain in the  
con-

*construction.* I must own my self of *Lambin's* opinion ; but, since Mr *Collier* does not here deliver himself after his usual dogmatical way, I shall not insist upon this passage, but proceed to instances, which no violence of *Construction* can wrest to a wrong sense.

Here let us return to the *Casina*, to which the *Poet* gives a very smutty conclusion, and a more smutty *Epilogue*. This prov'd from the Epilogue to the Casina. *Grege*, that speaks the *Epilogue*, advises the Audience to clap lustily and give the *Poet* his due, and to those that did it, he wishes as many *Whores* as they pleased, unknown to their *Wives* ; but to those that did not clap, he wishes a *He-Goat* besmear'd with the *Filth* of a *Ship* for a *Concubine*.

*Nunc nos æquum est, manibus meritis  
meritam mercedem daffre,*

*Qui faxit, clari uxorem ducat scortum  
semper quod volet.*

*Verum qui non manibus clare, quantum  
poterit, pluserit,*

*Ei pro scorto supponetur hircus unctus  
nantea.*



Epilogue  
to the A-  
sinaria an  
Encourage-  
ment to  
Lawsuits.

Here we have a Sample of the *Poet's Morals*, which Mr *Collier* has warrant-  
ed, as we have already seen. In the  
*Epilogue* to the *Afinaria*, if we may  
take *Plautus's* word, we may have a  
Taste of the *Manners* of his *Age* and  
*Country*, which Mr *Collier* is likewise  
very fond of. From both which put  
together, we may give a reasonable  
guess at Mr *Collier's* own *Palate* in such  
matters. *Demænetus* his *Wife* had caught  
him in a *Bawdy-house*, whoring in his  
*Son's* company, and rated him home,  
which concludes the *Action* of the  
*Play*. Hereupon *Grex* by way of ap-  
plication thus accosts the *Audience*.

*Hic senex siquid clam uxorem suo animo  
fecit volupe,  
Neq; novum, neq; mirum fecit, nec  
secus quam alii solent,  
Nec quisqua sit tam ingenio duro, nec  
tam firmo pectore  
Quin ubi quicquam occasionis sit, sibi  
faciat bene.*

Here the *Poet* justifies *Whoring*, even  
in an old married man, and pleads the  
common practice in defence of it. He  
thinks

thinks no man can withstand a fair temptation to do himself good. For with that Phrase, he sweetens the business and qualifies the offence.

Let Mr Collier compare these two *Epilogues* with those *English* ones to which he refers, and then condemn them, and absolve these if he can. Nay, even the Play of which *Plautus* himself makes his boast, *That 'twas written up to the strictest rules of Chastity; that few such Comedies were to be found, by which those that were already good, might be made better,* has a very broad touch of Smut in the *Epilogue*, even at the time he is valuing himself upon his Modesty,

*Speſtatores, ad pudicos mores facta hæc* *Epilogue to the Cap-*  
*fabula eſt.* *tivi.*

*Neq; in hac ſubagitationes ſunt* —

*Hujusmodi paucas Poetæ reperiunt Co-*  
*mædias,*

*Ubi boni meliores ſiant* —

Such Instances as these crowd themselves so upon us almost every where in *Plautus*, that 'tis hard to pass 'em over, and endless to take notice of 'em. But

having already far transgressed the intended limits of this discourse, I shall trespass no farther upon the Reader's patience on this head.

*Complaint  
of the  
Abuse of  
the Clergy  
not well  
grounded.*

His next complaint is *the abuse of the Clergy*. Were this complaint justly grounded, it would merit not only his, but all honest men's Indignation, and Resentments. But this Charge does not seem to be sufficiently made out. For 'tis raised upon a very weak foundation, a mistaken Notion, that Priests above all the rest of Mankind, are by privilege exempted from having their faults taken notice of this way; His reason for this shall be consider'd by and by. I suppose, if Mr Collier's Band hung awry, or his Face was dirty, he would use the assistance of a Glass to make all right and clean. Why then does he reject the use of that which might do the same office for his mind, and help him to correct the follies and management of his Life? The case is plain, he is blind to his own Faults, and mad that any one else should see 'em. This makes him call the shewing any of their failings, exposing the Clergy, as if thereby only they

they became publick, not considering that the Glass shews our Faults to our selves only ; other people can see 'em as plainly and as readily without its help. But Mr *Collier*, who takes every thing by the wrong handle, looks upon a correction as a reproach, and had rather a Fault should pass unmended, than be taken notice of. But because he pleads a peculiar Charter for the exemption of the Priesthood, let us see how he makes out his Title. The Considerations, upon which he founds it, are three.

First, *Because of their Relation to the Deity.*

This *Relation to the Deity* he swells <sup>*Their Relation to the Deity so considered.*</sup> to a monstrous size, and blows himself presumptuously up in his own conceit, to a Condition something above mortal. He pretends to no less, than to be one of the *Principal Ministers of* <sup>P. 127. 128.</sup> *Gods Kingdom*, to represent his Person, to publish his Laws, Pass his Pardons, and Preside in his Worship. Mr *Collier's* Pride has here hurried him into prodigious Insolence and Folly. To raise his own Character, he has made a *Pope* of every individual Priest, and given that



that to the meanest of 'em, which the most *Orthodox* part of the Christian World deny to the pretended Successor of *St Peter* ? Is not the whole world God's Kingdom ? What then, are its Kings, Princes, and Rulers, if every Priest be before 'em in Authority ? Mr *Collier*, I believe, is the first bold Mortal, that ever pretended to represent the person of God Almighty seriously. This to me sounds more like Blasphemy, than any thing in the most profane Poet. The *Pope* indeed presumes to stile himself *Christ's* Vicar general, but he does not presume to be the Representative of his Person. As Mr *Collier* has assum'd a higher Title, so, I suppose, he expects more reverence. 'Tis strange that Enthusiasm should shoot to such a height in our cold Climate, which it scarce ever reach'd in *Rome* its Native Place. But Mr *Collier* keeps a hot Bed, where he forces up violent Notions, in spite of the opposition of an unnatural Soil and Season.

Personal  
Representa-  
tion of  
Duty as  
surd.

But I should be glad to know, where-  
in this personal Representation consists.  
Does he pretend, like the *Pope*, to pos-  
sess

sefs any of the Divine Attributes ? Infallibility , even of the Church itself, has been long since justly exploded by all sober Christians, that know, and dare to use their Reason in the guidance of their Consciences. And the *Pope* himself in the heighth of his Pride and Usurpation, never pretended to more. But in what does this vain Creature resemble his Creator ? Can a groveling Mortal sustain the Majesty and Figure of Omnipotence.

If notwithstanding all these Magnificent expressions of himself, and his order, Mr *Collier* means no more, than The Power of the Church not lodged with the Priest. than that a Priest derives a subordinate Authority from the Church, to exercise his Function in Spiritual matters conformably to her directions, then all this insolent profane Bombast dwindles to nothing. For tho a very great power and trust is repos'd in the Church, yet I don't find, that this Power was ever lodg'd entire with the Priest, or any other single person whatsoever. And therefore Mr *Collier* grasps at too much, when he claims the same respect, and deference for every Priest, that is, or ought to be paid to the Church,

*Mission of  
St. Paul,  
and the A-  
postles what  
and how  
circumstan-  
tiated.*

Church, and the Governours of it. But Mr Collier finds, that St. Paul calls himself and the rest of the *Apostles* the *Ambassadors of Christ*, and thinks himself thereby sufficiently warranted to take upon him to represent the *person of God*. The word which St Paul employs, 2 Cor. 5. 20. is *πρεσβευτες*, which signifies to come by commission from another, and consequently may probably enough be render'd, *We are the Embassadors*, tho it does not always import so much. Mr Collier lays hold of the word Embassadour, and fancies himself in the highest, and most honourable post that can be, under God Almighty, that is, *to represent his Person, to publish his Laws, Pass his Pardons, and Preside in his Worship*. All this indeed, except the *Personal Representation*, was the Office of St Paul, and the rest of the *Apostles*. But without affronting, or lessening the Authority of the Clergy, I think I may lawfully question whether Mr Collier's Commission be of equal Extent or Validity with theirs. They were call'd to the Ministry immediately by God himself, endued with supernatural and miraculous

Fa-

Faculties, and Powers both of Discerning, and Operation by Inspiration from the Holy Ghost himself. They were to plant in the World a new Faith, which had not yet been heard of, except in a very small part of the world. Their Doctrines were reveal'd immediately to themselves, and had no other Evidence than their own Affirmation, and the Works that they did, to back and confirm what they taught. They had occasion for a Spirit more than naturally discerning to be assur'd of the sincerity of their Converts, and for a Commission and Power extraordinary, to remit the sins of those that they found to be true Penitents, and to support themselves and their Profelytes against the Oppressions of the Civil Power.

These circumstances, as I take it, make a very wide difference between the Ministry, and Commission of the Apostles, and the other immediate Disciples of our Saviour, and the Christian Ministry at this time. For first, They have now no immediate call to the Ministry, whatever some Enthusiastick or Knavish Sectaries may pretend. Secondly, They have no natural Gifts above other men,

*Difference betwixt their Commission and that of the present Ministry.*

to



to warrant a Pretence to an extraordinary Mission. Thirdly, They have now no peculiar Revelation, nor any other Rule of Faith, or Source of Doctrine, which is not common to all mankind with them. The Scriptures lie open for all that will look into 'em, and our Clergy pretend to no supernatural Gift of Exposition above the Laity, and consequently can offer no new matter of Faith. Fourthly, They pretend to no Spirit of Discerning above the condition of meer humanity to enable 'em to see into mens hearts, and judge of the sincerity of their repentance, and consequently must dispose of Pardons blindfold, if they exercise any such power, otherwise than conditional, and upon the terms express'd in Scripture. But the pronouncing an Absolution on those terms, is not passing a Pardon, any more than allowing the benefit of the Clergy to a Malefactor in a Court of Judicature is an act of Grace in the Bench. Lastly, Since the World became Christian, those extraordinary Commissions, which the Apostles and Primitive Christians had, ceas'd with the reasons of 'em. For when the Princes

Princes and Rulers of the World became the Profelytes and Protectors of Christianity, there was no further occasion to propagate the Gospel by extraordinary methods, which had the Civil Power on its side. By this means the care of the Church devolv'd upon the State, and the Priesthood became subordinate to it. For tho no State or Prince can make any thing a Rule of Faith, which was not so before in its Nature, or by some higher obligation, yet in matters of Practice in things indifferent towards which the Scriptures leave us at liberty, they have in all Countries (not under the usurpation of the Pope) asserted their Authority by ordering and directing the Forms and Models of Church Government, and appointing the Persons of the Governours, who are therefore undoubtedly subordinate to those, by whose Authority they govern.

From these differences 'tis plain, that the Ministry at present stands upon quite another foot, than it did in the time of the Apostles ; and that Mr *Collier* challenges a relation to the Deity which he has not, and in right of that

a greater Reverence and respect than is due to him.

*Importance  
of their  
Office no  
exemption.*

His second consideration is, *The Importance of their Office.* What that is, has been in great measure laid down in the preceding Article. How far they are concerned in publishing Gods Laws, and passing his Pardons has been already examin'd. There was indeed a time, when the Priests had a Monopoly of Faith and Salvation, and retail'd out Articles and Indulgences to the Laity, who repair'd to the Bank of Implicit Faith and Merit for as much as their occasions requir'd. But the weakness of their Fund being discover'd, that Bank is broke long since in *England.* and the Laity have taken their Consciences into their own Custody again, to Mr Collier's great Disappointment. However they preside (he says) in the Worship of God. If he means by presiding, Officiating, he presides over his Congregation, as a Clerk in Parliament presides over the House, because he reads the Bills, Petitions, &c. to 'em. That to officiate in the House of God is an Employment of great Importance and honour, I shall readily grant. And as they

they that perform their duty in that station conscientiously and well deserve all due respect and honour ; so on the other hand, those that prostitute their Character to base ends, and make the Cassock a Cover for *Pride, Ambition, Avarice, Hypocrisie, Knavery, or Folly*, deserve to be corrected, and expos'd to the Publick. The importance of the Office, which Mr *Collier* pleads in bar to any Lay Censure upon 'em, is a strong Argument for it. For in proportion to the weight of the trust, ought to be the check upon it.

There may be many Faults amongst the inferiour Clergy, which escape the notice, or do not fall properly under the cognizance of the Ordinary, which 'tis convenient shou'd be amended, for the reputation of the Order, and the good of the Offenders themselves. Mr *Collier* thinks otherwise, he owns that they ought not to be seen, but he would have the People's Eyes put out, rather than the Offence remov'd. A Blot's no Blot till 'tis hit ; so the reputation of the Clergy be safe, 'tis no matter for their Manners ; for the Sin lies in the Scandal. Else why is he so angry with the *Poets*,

A 2

for



for taking notice, that there is such a thing now and then to be seen in the world as a Faulty Clergy-man ? The Order does not pretend to be any more exempt from failings, than other men. Then where's the Offence in shewing what those Frailties are, to which they lie most expos'd ? 'Tis true, this can't be done in the Dramatick way, without the appearance of the Offender by his Proxy ; which stirs Mr *Collier's* Blood, who would have the Laity believe 'em absolutely without Fault. 'Twere well if they were so indeed, but since they are not, I think it not just nor reasonable, that the Laity should be cheated into such a belief. The man that labours too much to conceal his Faults, shews that he aims rather at Impunity than Repentance. For men seldom think of Reformation, while they can run on in a prosperous course of undiscover'd Villany.

Upon this account Mr *Collier's* reasoning appears very odd and singular. For if the concealing and covering of Men's Vices, be the means to advance and promote their corruption, he seems to take a sort of retrograde way to Reformation.

But.

But his fear is, that the Vices of some few thus publicly shewn, shou'd reflect upon the whole Order, and weaken their Credit and Authority in the Ministerial Function. This objection is already answered in the article of the *Misrepresentation of Women*; what has been there said holds good here, and needs no repetition. It can therefore be of no ill consequence; For those that are just, and Conscientious in the exercise of their Functions will lose no Credit or Authority; and those that are not, have too much, if they have any.

If Priests be without Fault, then to paint 'em with any is a Misrepresentation, and an abuse, a malicious slander of the Order. But if they be not, 'tis fit that the rotten Sheep shou'd be mark'd and driven from the Flock, to prevent the contagion, whether of the Disease or the Scandal, which are equally catching. But Mr Collier has learnt Politicks of *Hudibras*, and wou'd have Priests whipt by Proxy; their Faults shou'd be chastised on Laymens Backs. We thank him for his kindness, and are very willing to be his Deputies, provided

vided he can prove that the Physick will have its effect that way. I have been told, that a Purge given to a wet Nurse, wou'd operate with the Child; but I never heard of a Medicine that wou'd work *Vice versa*. I grant, that they ought not to be corrected on the Stage for Lay Follies. Their Characters must be proper, in order to which, whether they play the Fool or the Knave, it must be seasoned with a cast of the Profession; otherwise they are Lay Fools and Knaves in Masquerade. But as the Characters ought not to be so general, as to represent whole Bodies of Men, so neither ought they to be so particular, as to stigmatize Individuals, as they did in the *Old Comedy*. If this Caution be observed, not only the Collective Body of the Clergy, but every individual Man amongst 'em is safe from scandal from that Quarter. If the Poets have not observ'd it, Mr Collier in vindication of the Clergy has a just Provocation to lash 'em severely. But if they have, then Mr Collier does 'em wrong, and the Poets ought to resume the Whipterd, and return the Compliment.

His

His last, and, as it appears by his dilating so largely upon it, his strongest Consideration is, that *They have Pre-<sup>His Plea from Pre-  
scription</sup> examined. scription for their Priviledge.* Their Profession has been in possession of esteem in all Ages and Countries. That it has been in Esteem, and that it ought still to be so, more than it is, I believe the Poets themselves will allow. But that it has always been esteemed so sacred, that the *Antient Poets* durst never suffer any of their *Persons* of the *Drama* to make bold with it, I deny; and I think I shall demonstrate the contrary.

I shall confine my self to the *Dramatick Poets*, and only observe, that so the Priest be well treated 'tis no matter how his God is served. For *Homer* is caressed at a high rate, for putting a Crown upon *Chryses's* head, tho he uses the whole Tribe of the Gods like Scoundrels. The first Poet, that I shall produce is *Sophocles*. In the close of his *Ajax* the *Chorus* gives us the Moral of the Play in these words; *Experience teaches us much, but before the Event is seen, ne'r a Prophet of'em all can tell what things will come to.* <sup>Instance to the contrary from Sophocles.</sup>



Ajax Flagellifer.

Χο. Η πολλὰ βροτοῖς εἶν' ἰδοῖαι  
Γινῶσθαι πεινῖδ' ὅν δ' ἔδωκε μάντις  
Τῶν μελλόντων ὅ, τι πρῆξ' αἶ.

This is a plain reflection upon the Profession, and so remarkably circumstantiated, that there is no doubt, but 'twas the Poets real sense. For 'tis spoken by the *Chorus*, and made the *Moral* of the Play.

I shall pass by the reproaches which *Oedipus* makes *Tiresias*, because Mr Collier says they relate only to his Person, tho he himself in his *Defence* will allow no distinction betwixt the Man and the Priest. If you make the Man a Knave, the Priest must suffer under the Imputation. However in the same Play, *Jocasta* says, She wou'd not give a Rush for Divination.

Oedipus  
Tyran-  
nus.

ὧς ἔχ' ἡμαρτίας γ' αὖν, ὅτε τῷδ' ἐγώ  
βλέψαμ' αὖν ὕδα, ὅτε τῷδ' αὖν ὕδα —

In the next Play *Creon* amongst other reproaches tells *Tiresias*, that They were all a Pack of Mercenary Corrupt Fellows.

Τὸ μαρτυκὸν δὲ πᾶν φιλάργυρον γίνῃ.

Antigone.

We have not room to multiply instances so far, as we might, but these may suffice to shew, that *Sophocles* was not so much afraid of a Priest as Mr Collier pretends.

*Euripides* is not a whit more tender of 'em, *Agamemnon* calls the whole tribe of 'em a vain-glorious rascally Race.

*Euripides*  
not more  
tender of  
Priests.

Τὸ μαρτυκὸν πᾶν σπέρμα φιλότιμον κακόν.

*Iphigenia*  
in *Aulide*.

*Achilles* in the same Play (the Sobriety of whose Character Mr Collier is much in love with) threatens *Calchas* the Prophet before spoken of, and breaks out into this exclamation; *What are Prophets? Fellows that by guess sometimes tell truth, but generally Lies.*

— τίς δὲ μάντις ἔς' ἀνδρ.

Ὅς ὀλίγ' ἀληθεῖ, πολλὰ δὲ ψευδῆ λέγει,  
Τυχῶν.

*Ibidem.*

*Pentheus* in the *Bacchæ* uses *Tiresias* very ruggedly. He charges him with being Mercenary, and an Impostor, with seducing the People, and intro-

A 3 4

ducing

ducing a new false superstitious Worship, and orders the Seats from whence he took his Augural Observation to be pull'd down, with abundance of other Menaces, and hard words. These may suffice for *Euripides* at this time.

Seneca  
makes little  
use with  
Priests.

*Seneca* makes little use of the Prophets, or Priests; *Tiresias* appears twice in his *Oedipus*, and *Calchas* once only to deliver an Oracle. *Oedipus* charges *Tiresias* with confederating with *Creon*, and charging a false crime upon him, and traiterously endeavouring to supplant him in his Throne. These Instances sufficiently demonstrate, that the *Antients* were not afraid to make their Persons of the *Drama* speak pertinently to their Character, tho' they should thereby happen to bear hard upon their Priests. Nay, they thought it no offence to make 'em speak things inconsistent with Piety, and the Religion of their Country.

Ajax An-  
tigone and  
Philoctetes

The Instances of this are innumerable. The Rants of *Ajax*, *Creon*, and *Philoctetes* in *Sophocles* are extravagant. This Tragedian affords abundance, but to make a collection of scattered expressions, would require more room than

than we can at present spare ; however, *Euripides* and *Seneca* afford divers so very remarkable, that I can't pass 'em over absolutely without notice. In the *Hecuba*, *Talthybius* exclaims at a strange rate upon the Consideration of the turn of *Hecuba's* fortune. O *Jupiter* ! what shall I say ? should mankind address themselves to you : Or have we been cheated with a sham Story of Gods, and Providence, while Chance governs all things?

Ταλ. ὦ Ζεῦ, τί λέω ; πότερό σ' ἀνθρώπος ὄρεται ;  
 ἢ δόξαν ἄλλως, τιμὴν δὲ κεκτημένην μάτην  
 Ψευδῆ δοκοῦντας δαίμονων εἶναι γένεσθαι,  
 Τυχὴν δὲ πάντα τῶν βροτοῖς ἐπισκοπεῖν.

*Hecuba.*

*Polymestor* is much such another sort of a Comforter, he cries out in the same Play, and upon the same occasion, *Oh what a slippery thing is Human Grandeur, which is never secure. The Gods perplex and harass Mankind, that our Ignorance may support their Altars, and Worship.*

θεῦ, ἃ ἐσὶν ἔδδ' ἐν πίστει, ὅτ' εὐδοξία,  
 οὐτ' αὖ καλῶς πράσσοντα, μὴ πρῶξεν καλῶς.  
 φύρξει δ' αὖθ' οἱ θεοὶ πάλιντε καὶ πρῶσω,  
 Τραγυμὸν ἐνιδόντες, ὡς ἀγνασία  
 Σίβωσθαι αὐτὴν.

*Ibidem.*

*Electra,*



*Electra*, for a short one has a very pithy Ejaculation. O Nature, what a curse art thou upon Mortals.

Orestes. ὦ φύσις ἐν ἀνθρώποισιν ὥς μαγ' ἔκακον.

Her Brother *Orestes* is allied to her in Principles as near as in Blood; he can't tell what to make of the Gods, any more than the two Gentlemen before. Yet he *serves* 'em whatever they be.

Ibidem. Διλυόμην θεοῖς, ὅ τί ποτ' ἰσὶ θεοί.

All that he knows of 'em is, that *they are naturally dilatory*.

Ibidem. μάλλον. τὸ θεῶν δ' ἔστι τοιούτον φύσιν.

Troades. *Hecuba* is much of his mind; he thinks the Gods but bad Friends, κακὸς συμᾶχος. The Cyclops tell *Ulysses*, That Riches were the wise mans only God, and that he did not care a fart for Jupiter; but thought himself as great a God as he.

Ὁ πλῦτ', ἀνθρωπίστικα, τοῖς σοφοῖς διδς.

Ζητὸς δ' ἐγὼ κεραιὸν ἐφείσσω ξύνα.

Ὅυδ' αἰδ' ὅτι Ζεὺς ἐς' ἡμῶν κραιπνῶν θεδς.

Cyclops.

In the *Ion*, which is pretended to be a *Moral Play*, *Crensa* addresses herself directly to *Apollo*, and calls him κακὸς ευνάτωρ, *lewd Ion Whoremaster*. Her Servant afterwards calls him Rascal, and advises her to set fire to his Temple. With such Flowers as these *Euripides* abounds, which I leave for others to gather.

*Seneca* is as full of 'em as he, but I shall refer the Reader only to the *Chorus* of the second Act of his *Troas*, which being spoken by the *Chorus* looks more like the Poet's own Opinion, than if it had come from any other Person of the *Drama*.

*Post mortem nihil est, ipsaq; mors nihil,* *Troas.*

*Velocis spatij meta novissima.*

*Spem ponant avidi, solliciti metum.*

*Queris quo jaceas post obitum loco?*

*Quo non nata jacent.*

*Tempus nos avidum devorat, & chaos.*

*Mors individua est noxia corpori,*

*Nec parcens animæ. Tanara, & aspero*

*Regnum sub Domino, limen & obsidens*

*Custos*

*Custos non facili Cerberus ostio,  
Rumores vacui, verbaq; inania,  
Et par sollicito fabula somnio.*

Which is thus translated by the Earl  
of Rochester.

*After Death nothing is, and nothing Death,  
The utmost Limits of a Gasp of Breath.  
Let the Ambitious Zealot lay aside  
His Hopes of Heaven (whose Faith is but  
his Pride)*

*Let slavish Souls lay by their Fear,  
Nor be concern'd which way, or where,  
After this Life they shall be hurl'd,  
Dead they become the lumber of the World.  
And to that Mass of Matter shall be swept,  
Where things destroy'd with things un-  
born are kept.*

*Devouring Time swallows us whole,  
Impartial Death confounds Body and Soul.  
For Hell, and the foul Fiend that rules  
The everlasting fiery Goals,  
Devil'd by Rogues, dreaded by Fools,  
With his grim griezly Dog that keeps the  
Door,*

*Are senseless Stories, idle Tales,  
Dreams, Whimsies, and no more.*

Another exception, which Mr Collier <sup>Rude treatment of the Nobility a false charge.</sup> makes to the Stage is, that *they treat the Nobility rudely*. I must confess 'tis no complement to make a Fool of a Lord. But if Birth or any other Chance shou'd make a Lord of a Fool, I suppose the rest of that Noble Order wou'd not think themselves accountable for his Follies, or abus'd in his Picture. Shou'd the Poets presume to make such a one the Representative of his Order, and propose him as a common Standard, by which the Endowments of Quality in general were to be measur'd, their Insolence wou'd deserve the severest chastisement that cou'd be given. Or shou'd any one of 'em dare to characterize too nearly and particularly any of those Noble Persons, no doubt but he wou'd soon feel the weight of his Representments, and smart sorely for his sawcy Liberty. But while the Poet contents himself with feign'd Persons, and copies closely after Nature, without pressing upon her in her private recesses, and singling out Individuals from the herd, if any Man, of what Quality or Employment soever, fancies himself concern'd in the representation,

let



let him spoil the Picture by mending the Original. For he only is to be blam'd for the Resemblance. If Men of Honour and Abilities cou'd entail their Wisdom and Virtues upon their Posterity, then a Title wou'd be a pretty sure sign of Personal Worth, and the Respect and Reverence that was paid to the Founders of honourable Families ought to follow the Estate, and the heir of one shou'd be heir of t'other. But since Entails of this kind are of all kinds the most liable to be cut off, 'tis not absolutely impossible but there may be such a thing in the world, as a Fop of Quality. Now if there be such a thing, it does not appear to me, that because the Persons are great, and elevated by their Dignity above the rest of Mankind, and draw the Eyes of the People upon 'em, more than other men do, that therefore their Faults or Imperfections will be less visible, or less taken notice of, or that the Splendour of their Figure is an infallible Antidote against the Infection of their Examples. Unless it be so, it is convenient that some reasonable Expedient shou'd be allow'd to prevent

prevent the Mischief of Imitation, and that those who are too big to be aw'd out of their Follies, may be sham'd out of 'em. But this is only Hypothetically offer'd. Mr *Collier* perhaps will tell us, that there are no such Persons, that a Fool of Quality is a meer Poetical Animal, and ought to be rank'd amongst the *Harpyes*, *Hippogryphs*, *Centaurs*, and *Chimera's* of Antiquity. If he proves this, my *Hypothesis* in this point falls to the ground, otherwise I think it may stand in opposition to any thing that has yet been said.

If these and abundance of other Passages in the *Antient* Poets were compar'd with those, which Mr *Collier* produces out of the *Moderns*, the comparative Rudeness and Prophaness of the latter wou'd vanish. But he presumes upon the laziness, or ignorance of the Majority of his Readers, and does not expect that any of 'em shou'd be at the pains to confront his arbitrary, and unfair accounts, with genuine quotations. But 'tis time to have compassion upon the Reader, who has run the Gauntlet thro a tedious Refutation; in which if his satisfaction equals his Patience, the Author thinks his pains sufficiently recompenc'd.

F I N I S.